

## The International Language of PAC

*Wales Joins the Family*

by Nick Johnson, PAC Certified Independent Trainer,  
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My name is Nick Johnson, and I am the team lead for a very committed team of professionals in one of the largest Health Boards in Wales (that's in the UK). The team is truly multidisciplinary and includes a physiotherapist (physical therapist), two Occupational Therapists, two Mental Health nurses and a training co-ordinator. The main role of the team is to train all of the Health Boards' 16,000 employees and also to advise staff on any issues pertinent to Dementia care. The team also trains and advises Social Services staff in the Bridgend area of South Wales.

I first heard about the work of Teepa and the Positive Approach® to Care in 2014 via some of the training videos available on YouTube. As a result, I started purchasing the **Pines of Sarasota** DVD collection. In November of 2016, we welcomed Teepa and her team to South Wales to present two workshops on "Demystifying Resistance in Dementia Care." This then led to myself and my team being trained as Positive Approach to Care Trainers in August 2017. Attending these workshops were a wide variety of people from all across Wales and the South of England including family members, health professionals, and members from charity organisations.

The PAC approaches have led to a complete overhaul of our training programme, which although previously rich in knowledge based information, left many attendees thinking "well that's great, but how do I...?" The PAC techniques answer that question and enable a *doing with* approach rather than a *doing to* or *caring for*. We have introduced these techniques into our training programme and coupled with the Adult Experiential Learning Cycle (AELC) method, we have seen much more positive training outcomes.

You may ask "Well what are those outcomes?" Well, we have seen staff talking to us more about making connections and lightbulb moments of realisation. These changes have been seen across the whole Dementia journey from initial diagnosis to end of life. Staff have spoken about how they now see behaviour as a projection of emotions rather than something to be managed and how this realisation has led to an improved experience for the person themselves and indeed our staff. The Positive Approach gives people confidence in interacting with people living with Dementia and I have always felt that this has been a huge barrier to progress. One thing I must add at this point is that, although the techniques are easy to learn, they require practice and strong personal reflection to be successful; or as Teepa would say "Plenty of *Uh-Ohs* before the big *Ah-Ha*".

So where are we going from here? Well I have presented the use of the PAC techniques at a National Health Service (NHS) Mental Health Conference and there is plenty of potential to develop use and understanding of the PAC system across Wales. Teepa and her team will be returning to Wales later this year and we hope to continue to spread the word and develop our skills with Teepa and the PAC Team.

Lastly, it must be said, that ever since our first contact with Teepa and her team, who are all very helpful and dedicated, we have felt part of a wider family and I mean that in the truest sense. We are extremely proud to be a part of that family which has enabled us to grow as people and as a team.

*Nick is a physiotherapist (physical therapist) by profession based in South Wales, Great Britain and has had a specialist interest in Dementia for the last 8 years. Nick is committed to improving Dementia care for all partners in the care process by demonstrating practical skills, demystifying the disease, and fighting stigma.*