

# MODEM

modelling outcome and cost impacts  
of interventions for dementia

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## STAR: A Dementia-Specific Training Program for Staff in Assisted Living Residences

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Staff Training in Assisted Living Residences (STAR) is a training programme developed in the USA for care home staff working with people with dementia. It aims to improve understanding of the needs of people with dementia, strengthen the principles of treating people with dignity and respect, develop communication skills and improve job satisfaction.

### Key points

- there is some evidence to suggest the STAR program may help to reduce depression in people with dementia living in care homes
- further research is needed to find out if the STAR programme improves the quality of life of people with dementia and the skills and expertise of care home staff

## What is STAR?

The STAR programme was developed by Dr Linda Teri and colleagues at the University of Washington, USA. The programme focuses on the values, dignity and rights of the person with dementia and the strengths of staff members. STAR is an eight week training programme of two half day workshops and 4 individual sessions. The workshops include a variety of activities such as lectures, group discussion, case studies and videos.

## Why is STAR important?

In the UK an estimated 285,000 people with dementia live in care homes, this is 67% of the total number of adults who live in care

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homes. Depression and anxiety are common in people with dementia and their behaviour can change as their condition progresses. The National Dementia Strategy for England recommends that specialist dementia care training should be available for all care home staff. However we don't know how many care home staff have the opportunity to attend specialist training and there is no information on which of the training programmes work best.

## Does STAR work?

Two out of the three studies we looked at for this summary found that the STAR programme helps to reduce depression in some people with dementia living in care homes. However the results need to be interpreted cautiously as both studies were small (less than 65 people with dementia in total took part in them) and only one was a randomised control trial (RCT).

The first was a small RCT in the USA carried out by the team that developed STAR (1). The research found that the anxiety, depression and behaviour of people with dementia improved when staff had completed the STAR training programme. In the care homes where staff did not receive STAR training these symptoms either stayed the same or became worse.

The other two small studies, one in the UK and the other in Brazil, looked at the difference the STAR training programme made. However they did not compare their results with those of care homes where staff only received their usual care home training. The UK study (6) found that the people with dementia were less depressed and there were fewer reports of challenging behavior after staff completed the training.

The study in Brazil (7) did not find that STAR training made a difference, although there were slightly fewer reports of challenging behaviour, the quality of life of the people with dementia was lower after staff received training.

## Is STAR cost effective?

We are not aware of any studies that have looked at how much STAR costs and if it offers value for money (is cost effective).

## Find out more about STAR

Further information on STAR in the USA is available [here](#)

We don't currently have any information on STAR training programmes being run in the UK.

Find out more about organisations that have information or offer support to people with dementia and their families - <http://toolkit.modem-dementia.org.uk/further-support-and-information/>.

This is the short summary. You can view/download the full version of the summary with more detailed information and references on the MODEM Dementia Evidence Toolkit website - <http://toolkit.modem-dementia.org.uk/intervention/star-a-dementia-specific-training-program-for-staff-in-assisted-living-residences/>.

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Authors: Daniel Lombard

Edited by: Helen Hayes

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