

Awards for Learning, Development and Research

Pearson Award 2021

Dr Sandie Woods

In 2021 Sandie Woods, Senior Lecturer in Occupational Therapy, London South Bank University, was the winner of the Pearson Award. Sandie delivered dementia education (undergraduate and postgraduate) at London South Bank University and is a member of the Higher Education Dementia Network engaged in the development of dementia in the curriculum (HEDN 2022).

The award supported Sandie to attend the two-day 'Dementias 2021' National Conference in London, providing opportunity for an evidence-based update on recent best practice for dementia diagnosis, management, and care.

The conference offered face-to face and online delivery. Experts in the field presented their latest research in the diagnosis and management of dementia in a post-COVID-19 world. Individual presentations incorporated medical, psychological, social, and user and carer perspectives. Developments in assessment and treatment were shared, from early cognitive impairment through to palliative care. Panel discussions provided opportunity for debate and questions from the panel and attendees. Sessions delivered on Dementia and Delirium, Stroke and Dementia, Learning Disability and Dementia and Lewy body Dementia highlighted the complexity of needs, importance of team working and integrated care, and carer support. The concept of brain health came through in many of the presentations and the recognition that health is more than the absence of disease. Prevention first, mental capital, cognitive reserve and personalised prevention plans all featured in the discussion. The importance of diagnosis and annual health checks was emphasised as brain changes occur long before symptoms of dementia are evident. Occupational Therapists have an important role to play in dementia education and health promotion.

Networking with attendees enabled the sharing of information, ideas, resources, and good practice. Attending the conference also provided opportunity to meet people who felt equally enthusiastic about improving the lives of people living with dementia and their carers.

In December 2021 Sandie left her full time post at London South Bank University but has continued to deliver dementia education for example on the MSc Dementia Studies: Contemporary Approaches to Practice at the University of West London and share information at the PAN London Memory Service OT Network and other dementia forums.

The award also enabled Sandie to undertake study to explore the role of oral history in dementia care and the importance of lived experience and hearing the voice of people living with dementia and carers. Sandie joined the oral history society, undertook an introductory course in life stories/ oral history, attended the OH conference and is undertaking personal study into the role of occupational therapy and reminiscence in dementia care. Sandie is a member of two oral history special interests' groups (Oral History in Higher Education and Creative Oral History) and is also engaged in book reviews.

Sandie would like to thank Pearson for sponsoring the award and the opportunities it has afforded as a result.