

“Sundowning is an incredible opportunity to bring dementia more fully into public consciousness and in truth it could not be more relevant to UK society today!”

Interview with Sarah Mould

Sarah Mould will be participating in the Sundowning post-show discussion on 24 October. She is Co-Director of The Dementia Training Company (DTC). Based in Hampshire, DTC delivers training and consultation services to all sectors supporting people affected by dementia. Sarah played a key role in creating and supporting the ‘Voices for Change’ Group of family carers of people with dementia. She talks to Kali about her unwavering passion to support those living with dementia and theatre . . .

Q. Hello Sarah, tell us about your initial encounter with Sundowning...

My initial encounter with Sundowning was about five years ago when I delivered a dementia training session on behalf of Surrey County Council where I met Nessah (Muthy) and Helena (Bell) who were in the midst of doing research for the play.

Q. What was your reaction when you heard about Sundowning?

I was a bit overcome I think! I have been involved in dementia care for over thirty years and my interest and passion in this field has not waned over the years – if anything it is getting stronger. My other passion is theatre. So, knowing that a playwright was interested enough in the experience of dementia to write a play about it was amazing. I just felt that this was such an opportunity to bring dementia more fully into the consciousness of the public. The training I did with Helena and Nessah was about how to make our

communities more ‘dementia friendly’. The role that the Arts has played in this movement is phenomenal. So, the contribution that Sundowning will make to this is just so exciting.

Q. We are really pleased to have you participating in our post show discussion on Sundowning, which asks what is the true cost of care and how we care for our elderly who are affected by dementia, how relevant is this to UK society today?

Thank you. I cannot tell you how privileged I feel to have been asked to be involved.

We have lots of powerful statistics about the financial cost of care and there are incredible people working every day looking for possible cures and treatments, but in my opinion the true cost of care and how we care for people with dementia, of any age, is a social issue which we need to be open and honest about.

I know that there have been incredible advances in how we

care for and support people with dementia in the last thirty years, but there are ongoing issues which we all know about, but are really too slow in addressing. This includes a lack of knowledge in society about what dementia is; and from my personal experience a real lack of compassion. When I was fighting to ensure that my dad (who had dementia) was placed in a Nursing Home which was able to meet his needs, I was made to feel, by nearly every professional involved, that I was a nuisance. At no point did any professional seem to acknowledge that I (and my family) were going through the worst experience of our lives. Placing someone you love in a care home is the most difficult thing many people will ever do. This is not because care homes are bad and for many people this is absolutely what the person with dementia needs. It is difficult because the person you have known and loved is disappearing, the family life you have known is gone, the relationships you have change forever, the emotional and psychological experience changes you forever. Whilst Health & Social Care Professionals work incredibly hard every day, as a society we need to support them to be able to be compassionate and recognise that what they do and don’t do, what they say and don’t say will resonate with all those affected by dementia for the rest of their lives.