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## Life Story Book

### Do

Life story work can help people make sense of their past, gain a balanced understanding of their present and plan for a good future.

### Story

Mary has been helped by her daughter Ann and a volunteer to make her Life Story Book. It has brought Mary a great deal of happiness. Ann explained “This was something we could do together - we had lots of laughs and a few tears.”

The family had not seen Mary read anything for several years, but now she reads out the captions beside the photos. Recently she recited part of poem from her Book, despite her short-term memory problems. After keeping herself to herself, she is now more inclined to talk with other people about her Book. *(from [www.caringmemories.net](http://www.caringmemories.net) accessed 12/01/10)*

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### Hints & Hazards

It helps people to feel connected to their own story, to significant people and places, their family of origin and their heritage. Life Story Books have been used with looked after children, older people with mental health issues and people with learning disabilities (where it might be better to make a Life Story Video). Entries can include: letters from significant people, a family tree, timeline showing key events, photos and paintings from childhood, information about memories, likes and dislikes, certificates and other documents - not just health and care-related information!

Both happy and difficult times are part of the story. The Book belongs to the person and needs to be readily available whenever they wish to look at it. It should be robust, so that it can be repeatedly handled. Staff and relatives help the person to collect photographs and information. Keep an electronic copy as prints can be lost or fade over time. For more information see *Hewitt 2006*