

Phyllis & Grace by Nigel Gray and illustrated by Bethan Welby.

The moving story of how a little girl befriends her elderly neighbour who has dementia. Grace is a little girl; Phyllis is the old lady next door. Phyllis lives alone and her memory is fading, but that doesn't stop Grace from liking her. They find that, despite the gap in their ages, they have much in common and a moving and enduring friendship is born.

Explaining dementia to children:

It can be reassuring for children to understand what dementia is if a family member or friend is living with it:

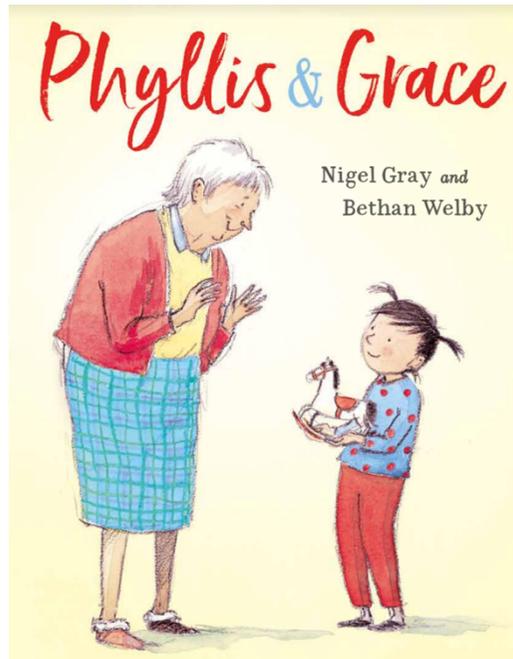
- Offer clear explanations
- Offer reassurance

Reading books such as 'Phyllis & Grace' can be helpful and support children to understand more about dementia and how they can help someone living with it.

Building empathy:

Grace is a very empathetic character. She understands Phyllis and seems to connect emotionally with her. Building empathy in children is vital, here are a few ideas that can help develop this skill:

- Help children to name different feelings & emotions, you could ask them to hold a mirror in front of them and practise making sad/happy/worried faces etc.
- Plant a seed and ask them to look after and care it so they understand the role they have in caring for living things.



You could bake cookies or cakes and take them round to your neighbours.



Take time to listen to the stories of an older person just as Grace does.



You could paint a picture or write a card or letter for someone special in your life just like Grace who paints a picture for Phyllis.



Showing kindness:

Grace shows such kindness to Phyllis and over the course of this book their friendship grows. The book ends with the words, 'Phyllis and Grace. Best friends.' The message contained is strong and it reminds us all about the power of friendship and of kindness:

- How kind have you been? You could keep a diary or calendar charting your own daily acts of kindness.
- You could begin a family or class kindness jar where you write down when someone has been kind to you. You could read these out at the end of the week.
- You could use the theme of kindness as a discussion or writing prompt:
 - What does it mean to be kind?
 - I spread kindness by....
 - A good friend always...
 - It is important to do kind things because...



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