

DEMENTIA IS DIFFERENT FOR EVERYONE

Sid Williams 2017

DEMENTIA IS NOT A THING!

- The word dementia has been a convenient shorthand for a group of disorders **but**
- It is often thought of as a single 'thing' instead of a convenient general term

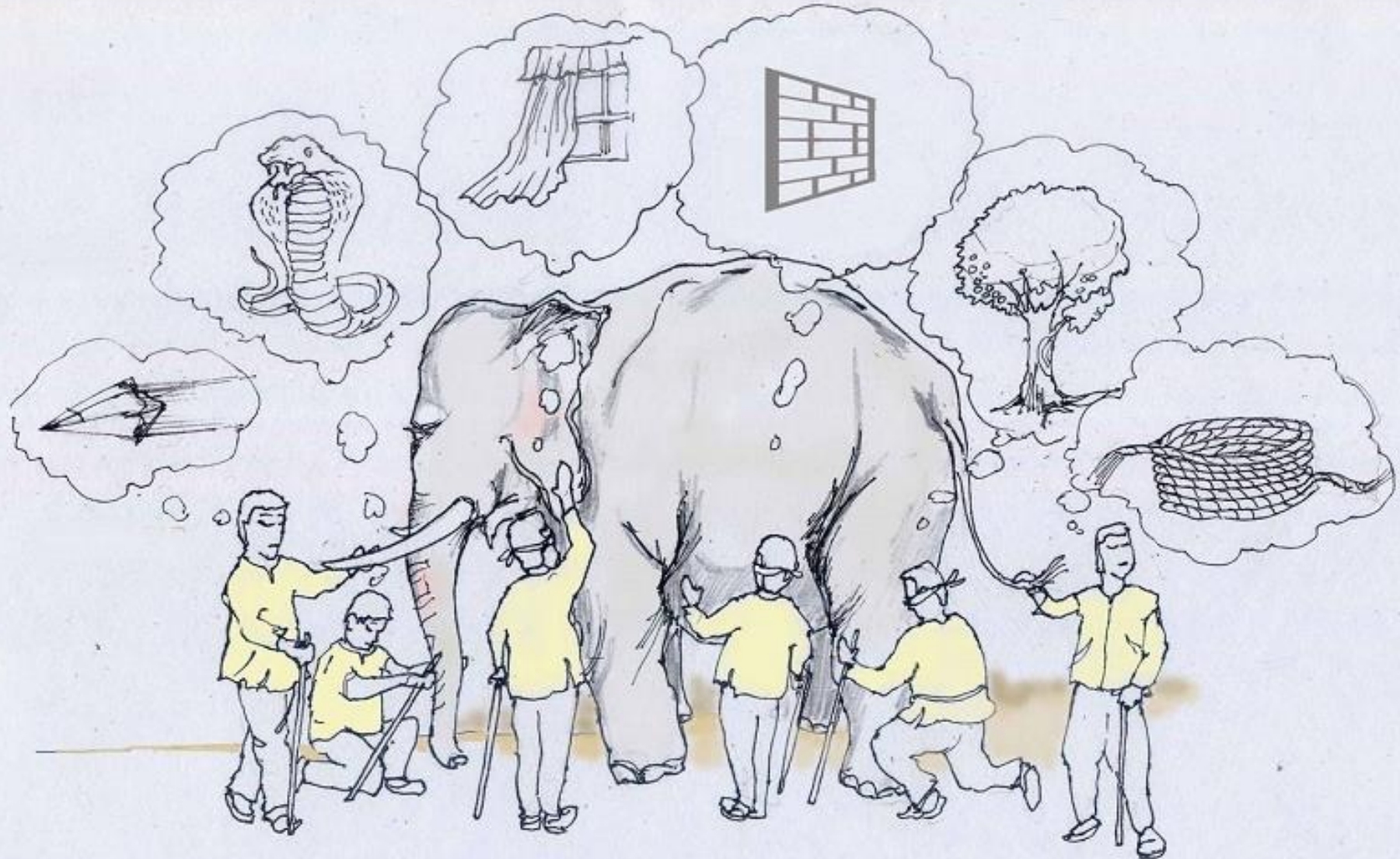
older person

And

- Has a documented dementing process **or** a loss of cognitive function not immediately attributable to functional mental health diagnosis or delirium.

Or

PARABLE OF THE BLIND MEN AND THE ELEPHANT



BUT MANY DIFFERENT ELEPHANTS!



Thousand Spices Restaurant, Homebush ★★★★★

VERY DIFFERENT 'DEMENTIAS' WITH DIFFERENT EFFECTS

- Alzheimer's disease
- Vascular dementia
- Dementia with Lewy bodies
- Parkinson's disease dementia
- Frontotemporal dementia
- Mixed pictures/pathologies

BRAIN DISORDERS LEFT OUTSIDE THE UMBRELLA TERM 'DEMENTIA'

- Brain problems which don't qualify as dementias (but often sensibly slip under the umbrella)
 - Traumatic brain injury
 - Alcohol Related Brain Damage
 - Localised brain damage (e.g. strokes)
 - Huntington's disease
 - Hypoxic brain injury

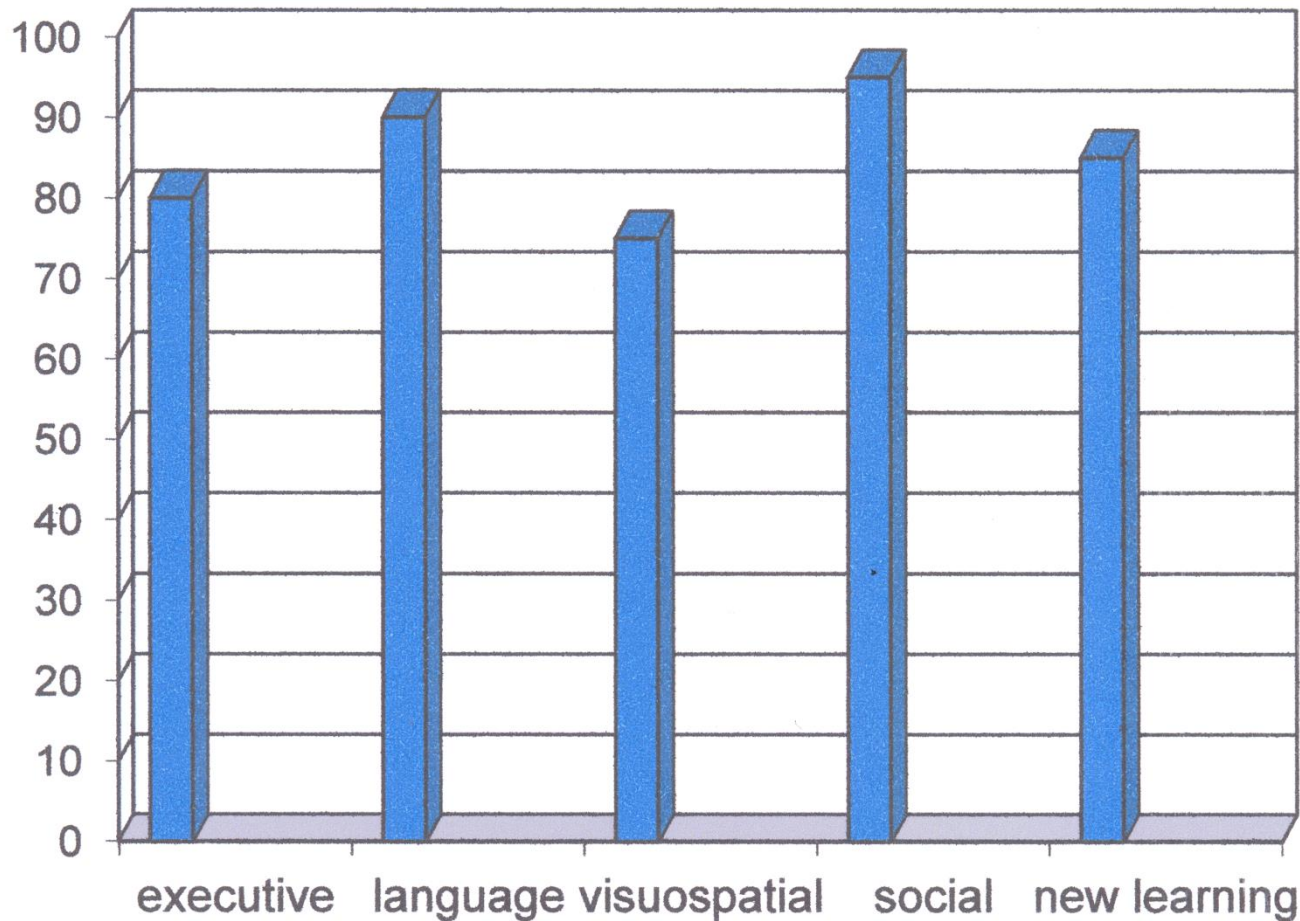
THE IDEA OF 'DOMAINS OF FUNCTION'

- Our brains have a number of specialised 'domains' of functions, e.g.
 - Learning and memory
 - Language and communication
 - Social and emotional
 - Complex attention
 - Executive function
 - Perceptual
 - Motor
- When the brain is damaged (e.g. by Alzheimer pathology) these domains are not affected equally

DEFICITS YES, BUT ALSO RETAINED ASSETS

- To understand the experience of dementia it helps to appreciate:
 - The person's deficits
 - The person's retained assets

WE EACH HAVE DIFFERENT LEVELS OF SKILL IN DIFFERENT DOMAINS OF FUNCTION



WE EACH HAVE DIFFERENT
PERSONAL HISTORIES,
BACKGROUNDS, CULTURES
AND SUBCULTURES



ACTUAL FUNCTION IN AND
PRESENTATION OF DEMENTIA IS
AFFECTED BY OTHERS (FAMILY,
FRIENDS, CARERS) AND BY OUR
SURROUNDINGS



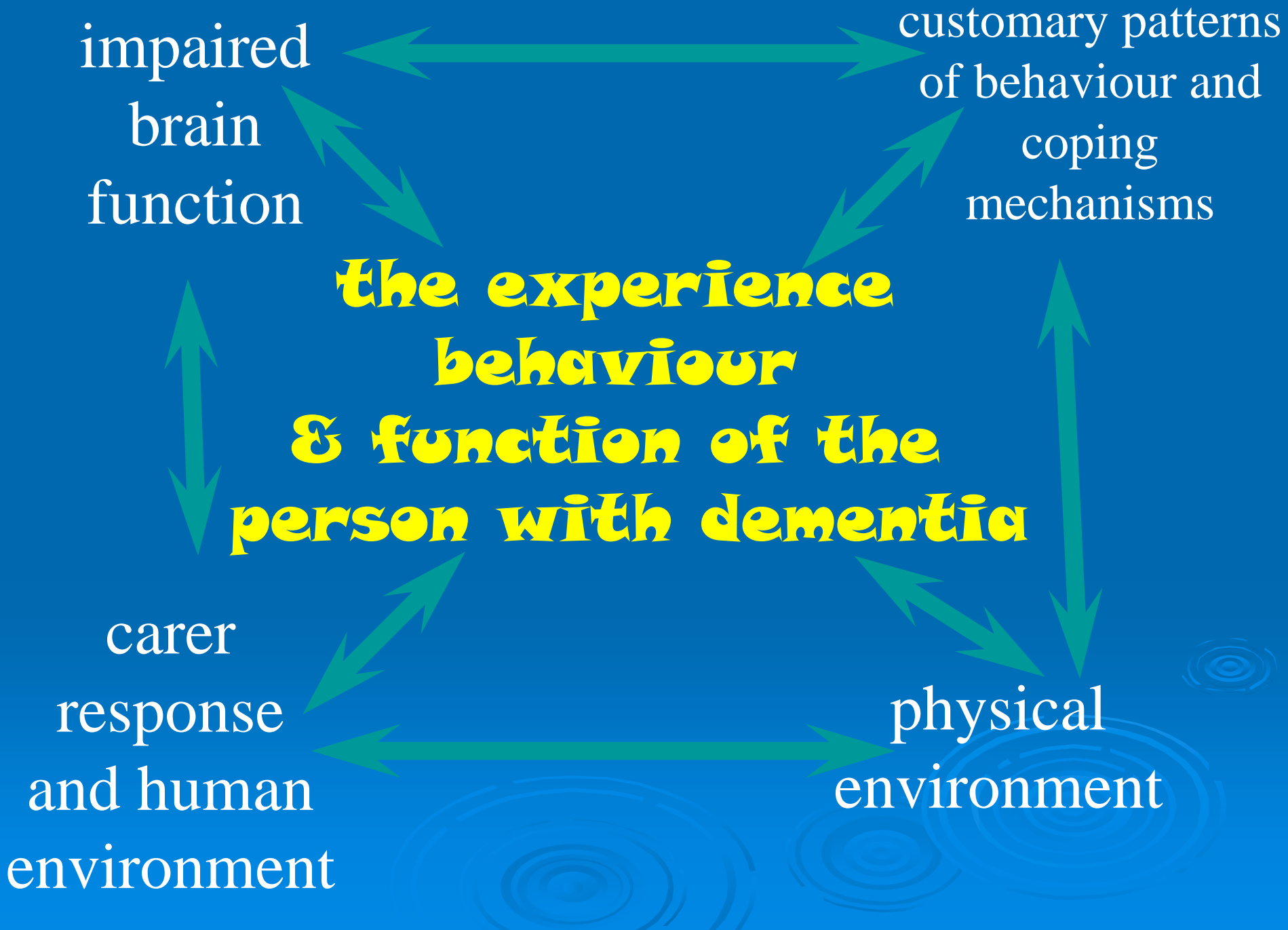
impaired
brain
function

customary patterns
of behaviour and
coping
mechanisms

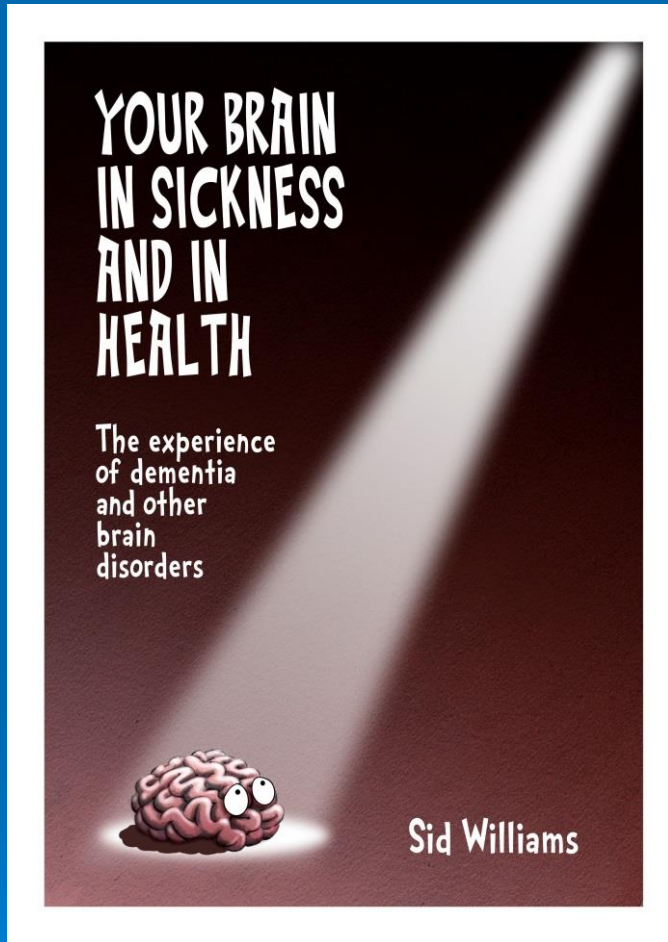
**the experience
behaviour
& function of the
person with dementia**

carer
response
and human
environment

physical
environment



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