

Community
Changes
Everything

Alzheimer Society
SASKATCHEWAN
Learn More Live Well



Dementia Friendly Resources

A helpful collection of tip sheets on dementia friendly interactions, language and communication, and how you can connect the Alzheimer Society to learn more.

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Offer Appropriate Help

- Consider wearing a nametag to help identify you as staff/someone who can help
- Approach from the front in a friendly and open manner
- Remove your hat and/or sunglasses so your facial expressions are more visible
- Get the person's attention and introduce yourself – move in their line of sight, then speak, then touch gently (if appropriate)
- Avoid making assumptions about what the person needs or is thinking
- Ask if and how you can help
- Provide clear instructions and answer any questions, even if you've already given that information
- If giving directions, provide visual cues/landmarks. If possible, write them down
- Offer to help them find their way and go with them, or offer to call someone
- If the person is with a care partner, remember to include the person living with dementia in making decisions that affect them

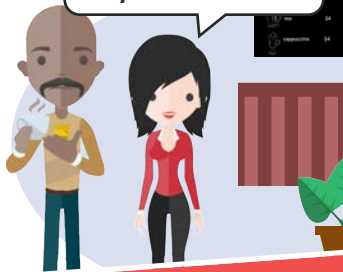
Incorporating these tips into everyday interactions will help staff at all levels of your organization contribute to a more supportive, inclusive and dementia-friendly community.



If a person living with dementia...

...has difficulty handling money or using their payment card...

May I help you count out the money for your coffee?



Ask if you can help count out coins or suggest another option to complete the transaction. Be patient and allow the person to take their time.

...has trouble remembering a PIN, password, dates, or previous transactions...

I get so embarrassed when I forget things.



Take your time... there's no hurry.

Be patient and take them to a quiet place, if possible. Being quizzed for details or feeling rushed can increase frustration and anxiety.

...has difficulty filling out forms...

...and you sign the form right here...



Offer to read questions aloud and repeat as needed. Point to the places where answers or signatures are needed. Use clear language and allow time for a response.

...takes an item without paying...

Hi. That's a nice hat you picked. Can I take you to the cash register to pay for it now?



They may have just forgotten. Remain calm and treat them with dignity. Offer to help them complete the transaction in a friendly manner.

Enhance Your Own Communication

- Face the person and make/maintain eye-contact (or put yourself at eye-level if the person is uncomfortable with eye-contact)
- Listen and speak directly to the person living with dementia (or their care partner, as appropriate)
- Speak slowly and clearly in a pleasant tone. Don't assume the person can't hear or understand you
- Use short, simple sentences and share one message at a time
- Avoid slang, jargon and metaphor that could be misinterpreted if taken literally
- Ask closed-ended questions (yes/no) and only ask one question at a time
- Allow time for the person to answer
- If the person doesn't respond, repeat using the same wording and then rephrase if needed, or try again later
- If possible, take the person to a quiet place to reduce distractions, for example, a seat that is away from a busy checkout, a noisy reception area, activity space or restaurant kitchen



Enhancing your communication on the phone

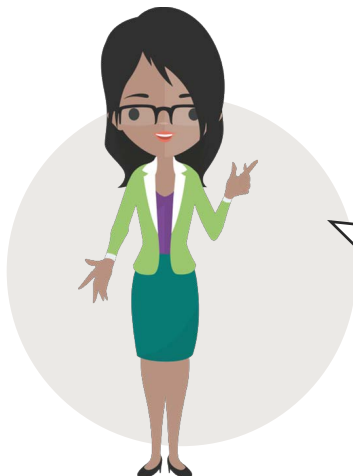
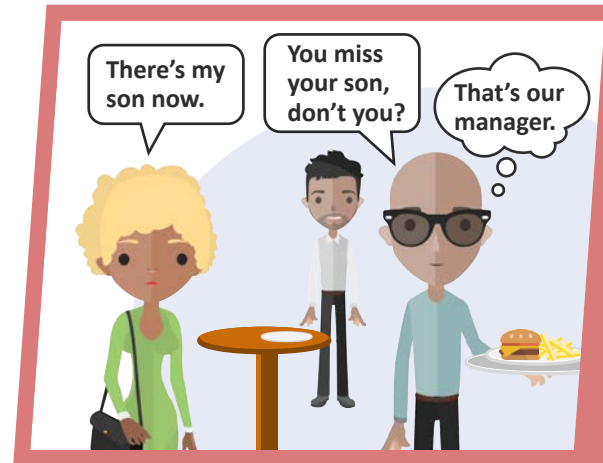
A person living with dementia may have more difficulty communicating by phone because there are no visual cues to help them understand the conversation. Here some additional tips to help enhance your communication when making calls:

- Find out when is the best time to call
- Introduce yourself and mention why you're calling
- Break conversation down into smaller pieces of information
- Repeat yourself calmly, if necessary, and don't rush the person
- Encourage the person to write the information down so they can remember after you hang up
- Re-introduce yourself and review your previous discussion if you return to the call after being on hold
- Send a follow-up email, text or letter to help the person remember details and to refer to if you call again



Support the Person's Reality

- Recognize how the person might be perceiving the situation
- Connect, don't correct. Focus on how the person is feeling and what they need, rather than what is factually correct from your perspective
- Observe the person's actions/body language – often they will communicate more than the person's words
- Invite the person to tell you more about what they are trying to do
- Ask the person what you can do for them/how you can help
- Don't ask the person to multitask. Allow the person to do one thing at a time, such as chat with you, **or** make a payment, but not both at once.
- You won't have the perfect answer for every situation. Get help from your manager or local emergency resources if you aren't sure what to do



Supporting someone who is lost/wandering

Wandering, in itself, is not harmful. But, it is unsafe if it exposes the person living with dementia to danger. For example, a person may be dressed inappropriately for the weather, may not know how long they've been out, or may not know where they are or how to get home. Unsafe wandering is an emergency and here are the steps to take if you need to help someone:

- Stop, introduce yourself and tell the person why you are approaching them
- Ask the person if and how you can help
- Speak to the person slowly and clearly
- Ask the person if there is someone you can call or look for a MedicAlert® Safely Home® bracelet and call for assistance
- Stay with the person, if possible, but don't crowd them or make them feel like they are being detained
- Alert your manager and/or call police or 9-1-1 if the person is in immediate danger, cannot be approached or there is no other help available



Written communication can be confusing for people living with dementia. Here are some tips to help make your organization's written materials more dementia friendly.



Writing style

- Present information one idea at a time and stick to the main message
- Keep language simple, but not patronising
- Avoid jargon and abbreviations and explain all concepts
- Make sure each section makes sense on its own – don't make the reader have to remember what was in one section to understand another
- Consider including contact details for readers to obtain additional information or clarification



Pictures

- Use pictures/symbols to help make text easier to understand, but keep in mind that too many pictures can be confusing
- Ensure the pictures have a purpose and match the content

Format

For ease of reading, use:

- 14 point font
- A typeface such as Arial, Times New Roman, or Calibri
- Plenty of white space
- Bullet points, **bold text** and headings to separate information and highlight important pieces
- Good contrast between text and background colours

Avoid:

- *Italics* – they are difficult to read
- ALL CAPS – they are difficult to read and can seem like “yelling”
- Cursive or unusual fonts such as *Brush Script*, *Corbis*, **Revie**, etc.



In a dementia-friendly community, people use language that is respectful and inclusive of people who live with dementia and their care partners. By using dementia-friendly language, you can help reduce the stigma.

When speaking about people living with dementia and their experiences...

...remember that people living with dementia are people foremost. It's important to use language that focuses on the person's abilities because the person is much more than their diagnosis. Language that focuses on losses and makes assumptions about ability reinforces myths and stigma and can create barriers to inclusion.

Dementia-friendly language:

- ✓ A person living with dementia
- ✓ Challenging, life changing, stressful
- ✓ Changes in behaviour (speak to how behaviour has changed)
- ✓ Reactive behaviour
- ✓ Responsive behaviour
- ✓ Respectful terms that acknowledge the person is an adult (e.g., "clothing protector" or "smock")

Language to avoid:

- ✗ Sufferer, demented person, victim, patient
- ✗ Devastating, hopeless, tragic
- ✗ [A person is] being difficult
- ✗ Aggressive
Referring to behaviour resulting from frustrations as "reactive" or "responsive" rather than "aggressive" shows that you understand the reality of the person living with dementia
- ✗ Terms that are typically associated with children and inadvertently infantilize people living with dementia (e.g., "bib")
- ✗ "Elder speak" / patronizing language such as "sweetie" or "dear"

When speaking about a care partner, family member or friend of a person living with dementia...

...remember that everyone has a different experience and try to use language that is emotionally neutral. When possible, ask people what they prefer to be called (i.e., some may prefer “care partner” while others may prefer “caregiver” or “supporter”) and avoid assumptions about the nature of the relationship or the care provided.

Dementia-friendly language:

- ✓ Caregiver, care partner, supporter
- ✓ Family member, friend of, support network, mother, daughter, etc.
- ✓ Impact of supporting

Language to avoid:

- ✗ Informal caregiver, professional caregiver
- ✗ Loved one(s)
(In some cases, people will be caring for a person with whom they had a challenging relationship – the person might not necessarily be a “loved one” to them.)
- ✗ Burden of caring

When speaking about dementia...

...“living with dementia” is a suitable general term to use. But remember that dementia is not a specific disease. It’s an umbrella term for a set of symptoms that are caused by disorders affecting the brain. If the person has shared their diagnosis and you need to be specific, it’s important that the language you use is accurate and easily understood.

Dementia-friendly language:

- ✓ Alzheimer’s disease; Alzheimer’s disease and/or other dementias
- ✓ Younger onset dementia

Language to avoid:

- ✗ AD (acronyms can be challenging), Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias (not all dementia are related)
- ✗ Early onset dementia
(While still correct, this term may imply the stage of disease trajectory rather than the age of onset)

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Knowledge
Changes Everything

How to Learn More

1. Call our Dementia Helpline

For more information about our programs and services or how we can help you or your family, call our toll-free Dementia Helpline 8:30am - 4:30pm, Monday to Friday.

Call 1-877-949-4141 or email: helpline@alzheimer.sk.ca

2. Become a Dementia Friend

Dementia Friends continue to learn more about dementia and how their everyday interactions can be more supportive and inclusive for people affected by it.

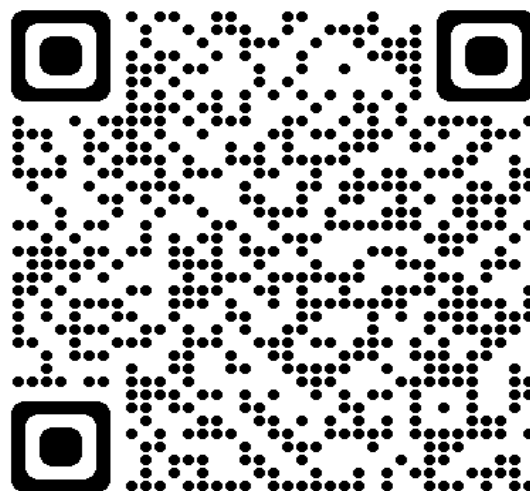
To sign up, please email:

friends@alzheimer.sk.ca

3. Watch for Upcoming Events

Visit our website and follow us on social media for details on additional learning opportunities.

<https://alzheimer.ca/sk/en>



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