

Elements of Dementia Friendly Communities

What do we mean when we say, Dementia Friendly Community?

Globally, Dementia Friendly Communities are a relatively recent phenomenon, however, some countries, such as Japan, Scotland, England and Australia, have been focused on Dementia Friendly Community development for over a decade. The definition of a Dementia Friendly Community varies across initiatives and countries, but common to all is an emphasis on social inclusion, respect, optimal independence and safety for those living with dementia.

In Dementia Friendly Communities the focus can range from raising awareness about dementia in the general public to training and equipping all professions or “sectors” of community to adopt best practices when engaging or serving people living with dementia, e.g. business and retail, primary, acute, long term, and home and community based care, social services, legal and financial services, faith communities, housing, specialized memory loss services, emergency response and law enforcement, and government planners.



A guiding principle in many Dementia Friendly efforts is that the broader community is positioned to serve as an extended caregiver of sorts, providing a safety net of compassionate support, services and civic participation opportunities for those living with dementia. The diagram above outlines how Dementia Friendly Communities might focus their efforts.

Dementia Friendly Community Aims

What are Dementia Friendly Communities seeking to accomplish?

Dementia Friendly Communities have a variety of aims ranging from individual awareness and reduction of stigma to full dementia capability in all societal sectors.

Example aims include:

- Increased awareness and decreased stigma regarding dementia via education and outreach
- Increased capability to serve and support people living with dementia via training and adoption of best practices in one or more sectors of society
- Increased access to community life, civic participation and meaningful engagement for people living with dementia
- Increased rates of detection/diagnosis, advance care planning and participation in clinical research
- Reduced fraud and abuse
- Increased quality of life for people living with dementia and their caregivers

Target Audiences and Audience-Specific Objectives

Who are Dementia Friendly Communities seeking to reach and what do they want them to do?

Dementia Friendly Communities vary in terms of target audiences and desired actions. A range of audiences and desired actions is provided below:

- **Individuals:** Increasing the general public's or targeted community members' awareness of dementia, reduce stigma, and enhance understanding of and compassion towards people living with dementia. One example global campaign designed to accomplish this is Dementia Friends (<https://www.dementiafriends.org.uk>), which is active in 11 countries.
- **Professions:** Increasing profession-specific skills and protocols that have been shown to be beneficial to people living with dementia and their caregivers, ranging from clinical practices, to banking or business practices, to general communications skills. Specific examples include, dementia friendly checkout lanes at grocery stores, banks putting in safe guards against elder financial exploitation, clinics hosting memory screens, opt out options on automated customer services lines, dementia choirs and memory cafes. Short videos describing various examples of profession-specific practices can be found at <http://dementiafriendsusa.org/become-friend>.
- **Communities:** Providing whole communities with organizing tools and guidance for undertaking a public or public-private community-wide effort that equips all sectors and community residents in becoming dementia friendly. One example tool kit can be found at <http://dfamerica.org>.
- **Government:** Offering tools, guidelines and resources that are specific to regional, state and local municipalities (<http://www.alzheimer.ca/~media/Files/bc/Municipal Toolkit/DFCToolkitvJAN2016>), addressing a range of topics such as public space design, disaster planning, emergency response, and law enforcement protocols.

Geographic Scope of Dementia Friendly Communities

What are the boundaries of Dementia Friendly Communities?

Examples of geographic focus areas include:

- Neighborhoods, towns, cities and other local communities
- Counties, states and other governmental municipalities
- Country-wide efforts

Dementia Friendly Community Spectrum

