

CASCADE

Community Dementia Training Package



Purpose

This package aims to provide dementia training for the community. This is to increase awareness of dementia as well as making more communities supportive of people living with dementia. It will outline how communities can support individuals and offer a more pleasant environment.

In the UK, there are over 850,000 people living with dementia, and this number is expected to rise drastically over the coming years. This is why it is so important for communities to be involved and become dementia friendly.

What is dementia?

The NHS defines dementia as a syndrome (group of related diseases) associated with an ongoing decline of brain functioning.

There are many different causes of dementia, and many different types. People often get confused about the difference between Alzheimer's disease and dementia. Alzheimer's disease is a type of dementia and, together with vascular dementia, makes up the majority of cases.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms of dementia include:

- Memory loss
- Decline in speed and accuracy of cognitive processing
- Reduction in mental sharpness and quickness
- Changes to language, such as using words incorrectly or difficulty speaking
- Changes to mood, attitudes and behaviours
- Decline in physical movements
- Difficulties doing daily activities
- Loss of interest in usual hobbies
- Increases or decreases in appetite
- Difficulty or inability to swallow

As dementia is a degenerative disease, symptoms usually worsen over time. Individuals living with dementia typically need ongoing help from loved ones. In the later stages of dementia, communication can be particularly difficult for diagnosed individuals and so day-to-day support and assistance can be required.



How dementia affects senses, behaviour and communication

Dementia can cause a range of sensory changes. Dementia can cause changes in personality, behaviour and even the physical body as a result of deterioration in certain parts of the brain. A few examples of how one's senses can be affected are:

Sight – Individuals may experience difficulties with their eyesight which means they may lose their ability to comprehend who or what is in front of them as well as an altered sense of depth perception. A few things which can help with this are:

- Keeping the colour of walls and floors different. Ideally solid and contrasting colours as these are less confusing to the eye.
- Bright tape on edges can help make it clear where there may be changes in height.
- Pictures and symbols on doors can make their purpose clear, such as bathrooms.

Smell – People with dementia often find their sense of smell can deteriorate. This can lead to an inability to smell smoke, gas or spoiled foods. This can be helped with:

- Ensuring effective smoke and gas alarms are in place.
- Throw out food that is out of date. Using food containers with date labels can help with this.

Taste – Sensitivity to taste can decrease with dementia. This can contribute to a decline in health through unhealthy food habits, with many individuals attempting to achieve more taste or spice in foods. Also, some individuals may try to eat objects that are not food. You can assist with this with:

- Place salt, sugar or other condiments in places that are harder to see. Out of sight, out of mind.
- Lock up toothpastes, shampoos or other scented products that could be misjudged as food.
- Childproof locks can make cabinets and closets with potentially dangerous items safer.

Touch – Some people with dementia may suffer a reduced sensitivity to touch. This means they may interpret hot and cold sensations differently and may have a reduced ability to feel pain and discomfort. These can be helped with:

- Colour coding on water faucets.
- Do not leave individuals alone with appliances that could cause harm.
- Pad out sharp edges and keep sharps such as knives out of reach.

Hearing – It's perfectly possible for most people with dementia to be able to hear normally. However, some may struggle with interpreting what they are hearing. This can lead to them becoming frightened, agitated or overstimulated. To help prevent this, try:

- Reducing extra noise such as radios or televisions playing at the same time, or playing whilst you are trying to communicate.
- Notice levels of agitation. This could be due to large crowds or gatherings. If individuals are agitated help to reduce or remove the cause by taking them somewhere safe and calm.



Communication – Communicating effectively with someone that has dementia is a two-way process, as it would be with any other individual. A few key considerations can make this experience pleasant and useful for both persons:

- Speak clearly and slowly, using short sentences.
- Make eye contact with the person when they're talking or asking questions.
- Give time to respond, because they may feel pressured if you try to speed up answers.
- Let them speak for themselves during discussions.
- Try not to patronise or ridicule what they say.
- Provide simple choices – avoid creating complex or numerous options.
- Keep your tone of voice positive and friendly.
- Utilise active listening to reassure them and identify non-verbal communications.

For a more comprehensive list on ways to communicate with someone that has dementia, click on the “communication” heading above.

CASCADE – Community Areas of Sustainable Care And Dementia Excellence in Europe

European Funding has been secured by a cross border partnership to develop a four year cross European approach to providing better care for the elderly and people living with dementia.

Called CASCADE this latest initiative involves 10 partners from the UK, Belgium, France and the Netherlands. The programme will see the construction of two new facilities for the elderly and for people living with dementia and will create a Centre of Excellence for people living with dementia across the partner regions.

The CASCADE project was approved and funded by the EU Interreg 2 Seas programme 2014-2020 (co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund).

What is the Harmonia Village (CASCADE) and what resources do they have?

Harmonia Village is one of ten European partners developing innovative ways of caring for people living with dementia. The village is based in Dover, Kent and offers:

- Long-term residential rooms
- 6 double bedrooms for respite
- Multi-purpose rooms for community training and activities
- Space for an ‘Informal cuppa’
- Virtual ‘Attend Anywhere’ for help and advice
- Health care tourism
- Café
- Dementia friendly garden

For more information on CASCADE and other partners see link:

<https://www.interreg2seas.eu/en/cascade>



Further information and useful links:

<https://www.harmonivillage.org.uk/about-us/>

<https://www.alz.org/alzheimers-dementia/what-is-dementia>

[https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/dementia/about/#:~:text=Dementia%20is%20a%20syndrome%20\(a,between%20Alzheimer's%20disease%20and%20dementia.](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/dementia/about/#:~:text=Dementia%20is%20a%20syndrome%20(a,between%20Alzheimer's%20disease%20and%20dementia.)

<https://www.kent.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/care-and-support/dementia>

[https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-04/Alzheimer s Society NEW Business guide Web.pdf](https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-04/Alzheimer%20s%20Society%20NEW%20Business%20guide%20Web.pdf)

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/dementia/communication-and-dementia/>

<https://www.scie.org.uk/dementia/>

Additional training materials are being developed to offer differing levels of information on dementia.

For information regarding further training please contact the Harmonia Village:
ekhuft.theharmonivillage@nhs.net

