



Alzheimer's Disease International

The global voice on dementia

Dementia friendly communities: the principles

Overview

A dementia friendly community can be defined as: a place or culture in which people with dementia and their carers are empowered, supported and included in society, understand their rights and recognise their full potential.

The cornerstones of a dementia friendly community

In addressing the twin objectives of reducing stigma and increasing understanding of dementia and empowering people with dementia, Alzheimer's Disease International suggests that the four essential elements needed to support a dementia friendly community are people, communities, organisations and partnerships.

People

Involvement of people living with dementia

Dementia friendly communities should be shaped around information about the social and economic impacts of dementia, the needs and opinions of people living with dementia, together with input from carers. Only by ensuring that initiatives are inclusive of people living with dementia at all stages of development, will we succeed in giving them the sense of respect, dignity and purpose they seek.

Some of the ways to achieve this include:

- Community consultations and workshops on strategies for the development of dementia friendly communities
- A charter of rights on the model of the Scottish Charter that identifies the rights of people with dementia and their family carers at every stage of the illness
- A consumer survey to seek feedback on the experiences of people living with dementia in their community and changes they would like to see put in place
- Resources (for example, how to communicate with people with dementia and information on dementia) to support the inclusion of the views and voices of people living with dementia in their community

Communities

The social environment

There is a need to tackle the stigma and social isolation associated with dementia through strategies to engage and include people with dementia in community activities. The availability of accessible community activities that are appropriate to the needs of people living with dementia, along with suitable transport options, are important for a community to become dementia friendly. The engagement of people living with dementia in existing community activities rather than only specialised activities is also important. Providing people with dementia the opportunity to remain in their homes and within their communities should be a guiding principle.

These are the opportunities we all have a right to expect: paid or unpaid activities, social opportunities through sporting activities such as golf and bowls, meeting with friends, participation in community activities such as choirs and walking clubs, access to retail, banking and other services.

Some of the ways to achieve this include:

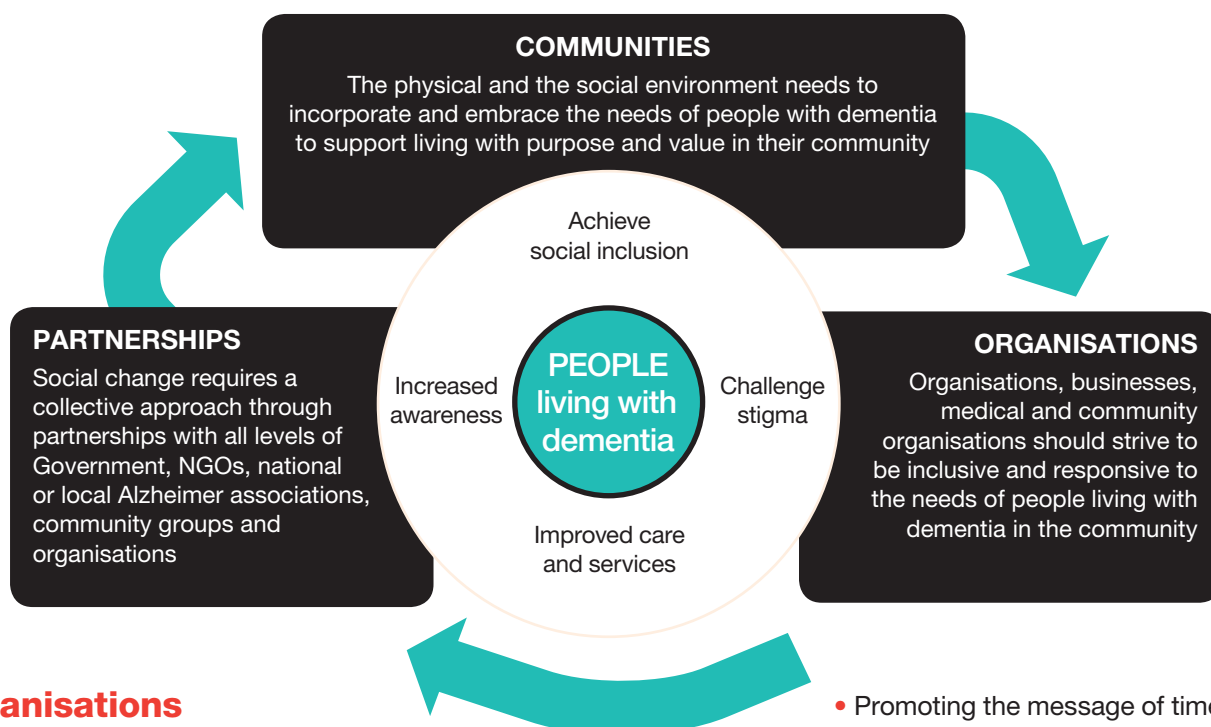
- A Dementia Friends initiative that builds community understanding of dementia
- Working with schools to raise awareness in younger people about dementia
- Showcasing the stories of people with dementia volunteering within the community
- Programmes to support people with dementia to remain in employment
- Collaborations with local community organisations to provide education on dementia in order to support continued involvement of people with dementia in community activities

The physical environment

A physical environment that supports the needs of people living with dementia is critical. It needs to be accessible and easy to navigate. Pathways, signage and lighting all need special consideration.

Some of the ways to achieve this include:

- An assessment of the local environment to identify key spaces and ways to improve them for people with dementia
- Identification of opportunities for collaboration with age friendly initiatives



Organisations

Dementia friendly organisations

For people living with dementia to remain engaged within their communities, businesses and organisations need to demonstrate awareness, respect and responsiveness. Encouraging organisations to establish dementia friendly approaches and implement strategies that help people with dementia will contribute to a dementia friendly society.

Some of the ways to achieve this include:

- Guidelines on the key principles of dementia friendly organisations
- Consultation on the possible use of a symbol to denote dementia friendly organisations
- Develop a dementia friendly symbol to support organisations that are working towards becoming dementia friendly
- Work with key government agencies, emergency services, retail and banks to encourage uptake of the programme
- Promote becoming dementia-friendly to mainstream businesses and provide advice and support to encourage uptake
- Develop a dementia friendly organisations resource kit, which includes an action plan to support the establishment of dementia-friendly organisations

Access to appropriate health care

A timely diagnosis of dementia and early treatment is a critical component of a dementia friendly community. Delivering dementia friendly services that respond to the unique needs of people with dementia at the right place at the right time.

Some of the ways to achieve this include:

- Activities that encourage total health and wellbeing
- Timely diagnosis and post diagnostic support

- Promoting the message of timely diagnosis and treatment through appropriate professional bodies and primary health care professionals

- Seeking to make hospitals more dementia friendly

Partnerships

The establishment of dementia friendly communities as a social action initiative needs cross-sectoral support and collective action to effect change. It is no one organisation's sole responsibility to effect change of this scale, therefore the collective commitment to this cause and working in collaboration and partnership is critical. The strengths and focus of organisations within a community need to be identified and built into the plan for establishing a dementia friendly society.

Some of the ways to achieve this include:

- Meetings with ministers, local governments, business organisations, consumer groups, service agencies
- Development of a partnership agreement template to assist communities to strengthen local partnerships
- Identify the critical partnerships at the national level to support this work and establish relationships through possible partnership agreements
- Explore opportunities to further represent the views and priorities of people living with dementia and the importance of creating dementia friendly communities

Alzheimer's Disease International
64 Great Suffolk Street
London SE1 0BL
Tel: +44 (0)20 7981 0880
Web: www.alz.co.uk



**Alzheimer's Disease
International**

The global voice on dementia