

DEMENTIA INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

A guide for libraries

Why should you care?

There are currently 64,000 people living with dementia in Ireland. 30 people develop the disease every day and over 500,000 families have been affected. The majority of people with dementia (63%) live in the community. They want to continue to be active and included, and use the many services libraries provide. Libraries are at the heart of communities and play an essential role in providing information and community services. Do not underestimate the difference you can make by having an understanding of dementia and taking steps to be inclusive. People with dementia say that it is the personal interactions which make the biggest difference to their experience.

What are some of the symptoms of dementia?

Everyday challenges differ for people with dementia. Some common difficulties may include:



1. Loss of confidence as reading and writing skills may be affected



2. Understanding written and verbal information

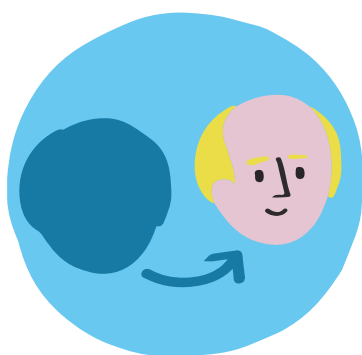


3. Finding words to express themselves



4. Navigating complex, confusing or noisy environments

What are things you can do to support a person?



See the person, not the dementia

Dementia does not define the person. Behind the dementia is an individual who may need a little support and understanding to stay involved and connected in their community.



Body language

Smile warmly, make eye contact and assure the person that you are there to help.



Take time

Give the person time to express themselves, and to contribute and partake in activities. Ensure that all staff are dementia aware and can provide extra assistance if needed.



Provide information

Provide books and leaflets about dementia as this may enable people to get some practical tips and the supports available locally. Promote inclusive services you may offer, such as arts and crafts sessions or the Magic Table.



Inclusive services

Review the services you provide and ask what might be helpful, e.g. individual appointments, memory boxes, opportunities to engage in classes and readings.



The environment

If possible, provide a private space to talk to people. Identify if there are any ways you can improve the environment by ensuring you have appropriate signage and seating. Try to ensure there is a set room for regular activities.

Dementia Inclusive Communities

To find out more about the things you can do in your community, training and other resources visit the HSE's www.understandtogether.ie/get-involved/

dementia

understand together

Everyone has a role to play in making our communities inclusive. Often it is the small things and acts of kindness that make the biggest difference in a person's life.