

A guide for arts and cultural facilities

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 and want to continue to be active and included. Dementia does not mean someone stops doing the things they love, but as time goes on, they may need support to do so. The ability to continue to engage with cultural activities can add richness to a person's life. Sometimes slight adaptations to your arts programme, guided tours and exhibition spaces can help a person to stay involved both as a producer of arts as well as an audience for arts and culture. Do not underestimate the difference you can make by having a better understanding of dementia and taking steps to be inclusive.

What are some of the symptoms of dementia?

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



1. Remembering names or specific details

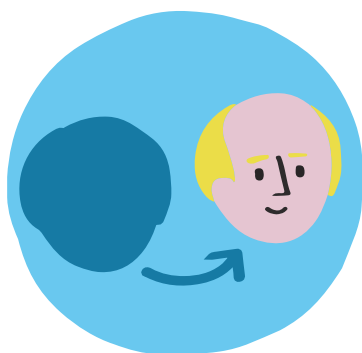


2. Finding words to express themselves



3. Navigating complex, confusing or noisy environments

There are simple things you can do to include 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.



Body language

Smile warmly and make eye contact. Check if there is anything you can do to help the person to get or stay involved.



The environment

Identify if there are any ways you can improve the physical environment such as having appropriate signage, seating and reducing any unnecessary distracting noise.



The Azure programme was originally initiated through a collaboration between Age & Opportunity, The Alzheimer Society of Ireland, the Butler Gallery, Kilkenny, and IMMA (Irish Museum of Modern Art). The Azure Network has now expanded to numerous arts venues nationwide. Azure offers guided exhibition tours specifically designed to support people living with dementia and their family, friends or professional carers, to engage with the art work on show and enjoy a social museum experience. You can find out more at www.imma.ie.

If you plan to host a facilitated tour for people with dementia there are a number of things you can do:



Take time

Give the person time to participate and express themselves. Ensure that all staff have been informed about the tours so that they can provide extra assistance if needed.



Keep informed

Ensure that the facilitator has an understanding of dementia, training in arts education and knowledge of the artworks selected, that the venue is accessible and that all participants are encouraged to participate equally.



Provide information

Let people know that your service or activity is inclusive. Provide leaflets about dementia in your settings as this may enable visitors to get some practical tips and information on resources and supports that are available locally.

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.