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Journey from Awareness to Inclusiveness

BUSINESS TOOLKIT FOR A DEMENTIA-INCLUSIVE SINGAPORE

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 Foreword	 Rationale	 3-stage framework	 Stage 1 – awareness	 Stage 2 – friendliness	 Stage 3 – inclusiveness
As Singapore works towards a dementia-inclusive society, businesses play a huge role in driving change in perception and attitude towards dementia.	Why embark on this journey? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prevalence• Impact• Experiences	Journey to dementia-inclusiveness <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Awareness• Friendliness• Inclusiveness	Knowledge of dementia <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Myths and truths• Understanding dementia• Communication	Supporting customers with dementia <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employee training• Products and services• Enabling environment	Supporting Employees <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Employees who are carers• Employees with dementia• Spotlight: Apex Harmony Lodge



“As Singapore works towards a dementia-inclusive society, businesses play a huge role in driving change in perception and attitude towards dementia.”



FOREWORD

If you are reading this, let me congratulate you and your organisation on taking your first step towards building a dementia-inclusive society. This first step represents your interest in our dementia journey that we hope – through this dementia-inclusive business toolkit – will become your commitment in future.

As Singapore works towards a dementia-inclusive society, businesses play a huge role in driving change in perception and attitude towards dementia. The condition not only impacts the daily lives of persons living with it, but also carers who may have to sacrifice their careers – in whole or in part – in order to care for their loved ones.

Through this toolkit, we are hoping that companies can be acquainted with a three-stage framework of Awareness (recognising the gravity of the issue); Friendliness (starting to make dementia-friendly changes to its business environment); and Inclusiveness (rendering support to staff with dementia or who are carers to loved ones with dementia).

As you flip through these pages, do know that sweeping changes need not be made overnight. Instead, we urge you to – at your own comfort – consider how far your organisation wants to go on

this dementia journey. The entry point and pace of your journey are dependent on your organisation's values, priorities, and resources. But that first step is the most crucial.

The beauty of this toolkit is that it is just as applicable to an individual as a 1,000-strong organisation. For example, individuals can always start a dementia-inclusive business initiative within his or her department, and on a department-level, a department-wide project can be wrought with greater effect. Finally, with senior leadership buy-in, a whole-of-company approach can create a transformational impact on your organisation. We hope you will find the case studies and tips useful.

Finally, I want to express my most grateful appreciation to our sponsor Musim Mas and everyone listed in our Acknowledgements, and many more, who have contributed to this toolkit. This would not have been possible without your generous support, sharing and insights.

Thank you.

Jason Foo

CEO
Dementia Singapore (Formerly known as Alzheimer's Disease Association)



WHY EMBARK ON THIS JOURNEY?

Prevalence • Impact • Experiences



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WHY EMBARK ON THIS JOURNEY?

PREVALENCE OF DEMENTIA IN SINGAPORE

In 2015, the Well-Being of the Singapore Elderly Study (WiSE¹) by the Institute of Mental Health found that one in 10 people aged 60 and above, and half of those aged 80 and above had dementia. Based on this, it is estimated that more than 100,000 people in Singapore may have dementia by 2030.

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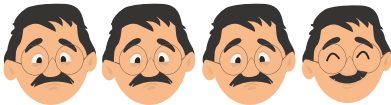
¹ Subramaniam M. et al. (2015) Prevalence of Dementia in People Aged 60 Years and Above: Results from the WiSE Study. Journal of Alzheimer's Disease, vol. 45, no. 4, pp. 1127-1138

IMPACT OF DEMENTIA

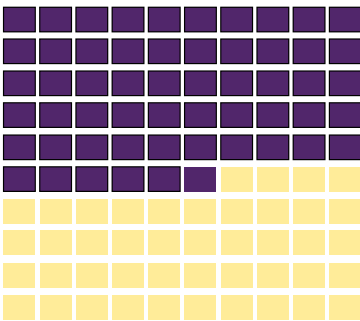
In a Singapore-wide survey² on dementia in 2019, persons with dementia and their carers experienced rejection, loneliness and shame, and felt incompetent.



3 in 4 feel rejected and lonely

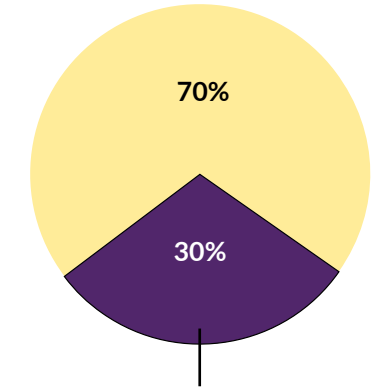


56% feel they are treated as less competent due to their condition



1 in 2
feel ashamed of their condition

Nearly **30%** have been in embarrassing public situations while caring for persons with dementia



More than 1 in 10 sense awkwardness around them on such occasions

² Singapore-wide survey by Singapore Management University and ADA in 2019: 3 in 4 persons with dementia feel rejection and loneliness, national survey on dementia finds. <https://dementia.org.sg/smu-ada-survey-2019>



EXPERIENCES WITH DEMENTIA

Supermarket challenge

As an avid cook, Emily Ong frequents supermarkets. But frontotemporal dementia, which she was diagnosed with at 51 years old, makes word-finding a difficulty.

“With my challenge in word-finding, going to the supermarket, even the one familiar to me, is a struggle.

“When I can’t find an item and can’t recall its name or the words to describe the item, I can’t ask for help. If I were to approach people for help and start to hum and haw, they’d get frustrated.

“Most supermarket employees don’t know how to assist persons with dementia.”

Emily also at times forgets her bank card PIN when she tries to pay for her shopping.

“I either can’t remember all the numbers or their correct sequence.

“On one occasion, the queue was quite long, so the anxiety started to build up. I knew I was in trouble.

“When I struggled with the NETS machine, the cashier shot me a dirty look and asked: ‘Is this even your own bank card?’”

The implementation of safe-distancing measures to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic has made matters worse for Emily.

“Take the queue markers at supermarkets as an example. I see them on the floor but my brain can’t even process something as simple and logical as standing on the marker when queuing for the cashier.”



Food for thought

How can supermarkets make shopping more conducive for persons with dementia, especially if they are on their own?

Inattentive care

Steven Lau has moderate dementia. His wife Wong Lai Quen, who is also his carer, says hospital visits with him can be tricky.

She recalls the time she had to take their domestic helper to the hospital for treatment. They took Steven along as they did not want him to be home alone.

The hospital attendant refused to let Steven in as the COVID-19 safe-entry restrictions allowed only one person to accompany each patient.

“I explained that Steven had dementia but the attendant still refused to let him in.

“I feel that hospital employees, including doctors and nurses, are not as understanding as I hope they’d be when I tell them that my husband has dementia. They’d usually just give a cursory nod and move on.

“I am still taken aback by this. I’d forgive insensitive behaviours in malls – I don’t expect everyone to understand dementia – but I expect better from hospital staff, especially

Food for thought

Persons with dementia and their carers have experienced negative encounters in hospitals. How can hospitals and other healthcare facilities, as places frequented by persons with dementia and their carers, improve the patient’s experience?

doctors and nurses.”

In another incident, Lai Quen took Steven to a specialist at a private hospital. She had written a note to the doctor beforehand to explain Steven’s condition and facilitate the consultation.

“I wrote that Steven was living with dementia and that he could have trouble answering or responding to questions.

“The doctor simply showed the note to my husband and proceeded to ask him questions. I wasn’t consulted at all.

“I felt that we wasted the appointment. We had paid for consultation but I doubt the doctor got to the root of Steven’s issue because he spoke to only Steven, whose answers were at times incongruent.

“I’m perplexed by hospital staff’s indifference towards dementia.”



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What’s for dinner?

Daniel Lim is a carer to his ageing parents. His mother was diagnosed with Stage 3 breast cancer in the same year his father was diagnosed with dementia.

Daniel points out how common items are not created with consideration to persons with dementia. He cited a challenging dining experience he had with his father.

“The menu was all text. Dad could read but he couldn’t associate the words with the food. He could not picture the food in his mind.

“We spent an hour trying to order something as simple as noodles. I felt eyes on us, as if accusing us of taking up space and wasting time.

“I had not forewarned the restaurant about Dad’s condition as I didn’t feel it’s my place to do so and I didn’t want Dad’s dignity compromised.

“I believe in empowering Dad and I let him make decisions whenever possible.”

Daniel stresses that he’s not asking for preferential treatment.

“We are part of the community and can be treated the same way as other people – albeit with more patience. We understand restaurant tables need a quick turnaround

but persons with dementia have a different set of needs.”

In an ideal setting, restaurant staff can spot persons with dementia and assist accordingly. And a pictorial menu might just do the trick. Unfortunately, this is still not happening in most F&B settings.

“Carers might not be able to articulate the support they need and restaurant staff might not be able to identify the challenges faced by diners with dementia and their carers. It’s quite a conundrum.”



Triggered without warning

Anjang Rosli was diagnosed with Lewy body dementia in 2014 at the age of 50.

He believes it’s best for persons with dementia to be upfront with the condition – so they can avoid unpleasantness.

“I once went to an eatery famous for its fried chicken. I was craving its spaghetti and had gone there by myself.

“It was one of my bad days.

“I called out to someone who was preparing the food but I was ignored. I called out to the person again and was greeted with a curt reply: ‘Yes. What do you want?’

“Maybe he responded in that manner because he was busy and the place was uncomfortably hot. But it made me snap. I was triggered.

“I punched the employee and he fell. I thought nothing of my action. I then said to the employee, ‘It’s okay, I don’t want to buy from you anyway,’ and left.

“When I got home, my wife Sarimah saw the cuts on my hand and questioned me. She was worried. I told her what had happened.

“Sarimah took me to the eatery and apologised to the employee I assaulted, explaining my condition to him.

“The employee gave me a big hug and said: ‘Uncle, I understand. The next time you’re here, look for me and I will attend to you personally.’”

Food for thought

Not all persons with dementia are comfortable with disclosing their condition and their carers feel they should respect that. But concealing the condition makes it difficult for service providers to deliver a positive experience. To counter this, businesses can learn to identify customers with dementia and make accommodations in discretion.



IMPORTANCE OF BEING DEMENTIA-INCLUSIVE

Dementia-inclusive businesses empower persons with dementia to be independent customers and employees, and give carers greater peace of mind. Here are 3 reasons why businesses should embark on this journey:

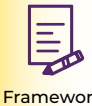
1 Growing need
With the increasing prevalence of dementia, businesses may see a rise in the number of customers or employees with dementia. Becoming dementia-inclusive ensures that businesses are well-equipped to address this growing need.

2 More socially savvy customers
Customers are becoming increasingly socially savvy and demand that businesses be more socially responsible. Specific to dementia, a survey by Singapore Management University (SMU) and ADA in 2019 found that:

- Nearly 8 in 10 people wanted to do more to improve the lives of persons with dementia
- 70% agreed that Singapore needed to provide more dementia-friendly amenities as customers wanted businesses to improve their social responsibility

3 Enhanced reputation and equity
Being dementia-inclusive, whether towards customers or employees, will enhance a brand's reputation and equity. Research³ found that corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives have positive impacts on brand reputation and equity.

³ Mahmood A., & Bashir J. (2020). How does corporate social responsibility transform brand reputation into brand equity? Economic and noneconomic perspectives of CSR. International Journal of Engineering Business Management.





3-STAGE FRAMEWORK

Journey to dementia-inclusiveness



STAGE 1: AWARENESS

Myths and truths • Understanding dementia • Communication



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STAGE 1: AWARENESS

The nationwide survey by SMU and ADA in 2019 found stigmatic attitude to be worst among people with no connection to dementia, and 57% of the respondents considered themselves unknowledgeable about dementia.

Hence it is imperative that the journey towards becoming dementia-inclusive begins with awareness.

At this stage, businesses are just becoming aware of dementia as an issue they need to address. There is an interest to learn more about dementia.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Here's a checklist to help you fulfil Stage 1
- ☐ Understand dementia
 - ☐ Learn dementia-inclusive communication
 - ☐ Organise talks about dementia in-house and with business networks

REGULAR AGEING

Memory and concentration

- May misplace items but can retrace steps to recall the location
- May forget details of conversations but can recall eventually

Mood and behaviour

- May experience sadness or anxiety due to specific reasons
- No significant personality changes
- Intact interpersonal social skills

Language and expression

- May struggle finding the right words to express oneself

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- Misplaces items in odd places and has difficulty recalling
- Forgets recent conversations and asks repetitive questions

- Rapid mood swings
- May become depressed or agitated when triggered
- May avoid social activities

- Difficulty in completing sentences and loss of the ability to initiate conversations

TYPES OF DEMENTIA

Dementia is an umbrella term for a range of symptoms associated with cognitive impairment. There are several types of dementia, each with different symptoms and care needs, and the symptoms may overlap as the condition progresses. Below are the more common types of dementia:

Alzheimer's is the most common type of dementia with a very subtle and gradual onset. It is a progressive condition where symptoms worsen over time, impacting memory, thinking skills and eventually the ability to carry out daily self-care such as dressing or toileting.

Frontotemporal Dementia (FTD) is often characterised by marked personality changes and in some cases, language difficulties. Most people impacted by FTD are younger, between 40-70 years. Due to the symptoms, FTD may be mistaken for Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease or

psychiatric disorders like depression, obsessive-compulsive disorder and schizophrenia have overlapping symptoms. There is no treatment or cure, but medications and lifestyle changes can help to alleviate some of the symptoms.

Dementia with Lewy Bodies or Lewy Body Dementia (LBD) has symptoms such as slowness, tremor, rigidity and visual hallucinations. Other prominent symptoms include challenges with attention, organisation, problem-solving and planning. Persons with LBD are also more susceptible to falls because of their increased rigidity, instability and slow gait. With these symptoms, LBD has the features of Parkinson's disease.

Vascular Dementia is caused by disease or injury to blood vessels in the brain, mostly strokes. Onset is normally abrupt although it can be gradual, and symptoms depend on the location and size of the stroke. Controlling risk factors such as high blood pressure, diabetes mellitus, high cholesterol and smoking may slow progression and reduce the risk of stroke recurrence.



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COMMON MYTHS SURROUNDING DEMENTIA

MYTH

Persons with dementia don't understand what's happening around them

TRUTH

They can understand what is happening around them. Although their verbal communication may become impaired as the dementia progresses, it is important to try to communicate with them. This may be done by engaging them through the five senses, such as using visual cues or touch. Persons with dementia have the right to be included.

MYTH

Persons with dementia are violent and aggressive

TRUTH

Declining memory and ability to articulate their thoughts and feelings can cause persons with dementia to vent their frustration through their behaviour. Making the environment as comfortable and calming as possible can avoid upsetting situations for persons with dementia and the people nearby.

MYTH

Dementia is a mental illness

TRUTH

Dementia is a general term to describe a set of symptoms impacting the brain, leading to a decline in brain function due to physical changes in the brain. Symptoms can include loss of memory, language, problem-solving and other thinking abilities, which interferes with daily living. Mental illness, on the other hand, refers to a wider range of mental health conditions that impact mood, thought and behaviour. Although dementia impacts the overall mental health, it is not a mental illness.

MYTH

Life isn't worth living if you have dementia

TRUTH

Dementia is a life-changing diagnosis often associated with challenges and progressive decline. But there are ways to improve the quality of life for persons with dementia, as studies have found. It is heartening when persons with dementia still find meaning and joy in life.

MYTH

You should correct persons with dementia when they stumble in their speech

TRUTH

Persons with dementia make mistakes – they might call you by the wrong name or get names mixed up when telling a story. Changes to their brain might impact their perception of reality and correcting their errors can create further confusion and cause depression. It is recommended that we show encouragement and support by asking engaging questions to find out what they are trying to express and understand their point of view.

MYTH

Early diagnosis of dementia is unhelpful since it's not curable

TRUTH

Early diagnosis is crucial in determining appropriate treatment needs for persons with dementia and to help them and their family plan for the future. A timely diagnosis also gives them the opportunity to learn about their condition, understand changes as they occur, to plan and cope better with day-to-day challenges associated with cognitive impairment.





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THE ABCD OF DEMENTIA

Dementia causes progressive decline in one’s cognitive abilities, impacting memory and other thinking skills.

Although the risk of dementia increases with age, cases of younger persons diagnosed with dementia is also

on the rise. Besides memory, dementia can impact judgment, language, planning and behaviour, leading to increasing difficulties in coping with everyday activities such as driving, cooking, shopping, managing finances or holding down a job.

A ACTIVITIES

- Difficulty in performing familiar tasks a person used to do well, such as cooking and driving.

B BEHAVIOURAL CHANGES

- Losing interest in hobbies or personal activities, and avoiding social activities.
- Changes in mood, behaviour and personality. Rapid mood swings for no reason, withdrawn from group activities, becoming passive and sleeping more than usual. Might appear insensitive towards others.

Tip

Not all persons living with dementia will experience all 10 symptoms. Neither are they limited to just these 10 symptoms. Generally, be mindful and observant of any progressive decline in cognitive abilities, impacting one’s ability to cope with everyday activities.



C COGNITIVE DECLINE

- Memory loss that can disrupt daily life and impact daily routine. Often forgets recent information. May forget important dates or events, and ask the same questions repeatedly.
- Misplacing or losing items and inability to recover them.
- Difficulties in planning and thinking. May have difficulty in financial transactions – handling money, paying bills and following instructions. May also find it difficult to concentrate and take much longer to perform a task.
- Diminished judgment and social behaviour. May cease to know what is appropriate or safe. For instance, using crude language or making insensitive remarks, or touching a hot kettle.
- Problems with visual perception – may have difficulties identifying objects in a familiar environment and judging distances or depths. Activities like reading and driving may become increasingly challenging.
- Difficulties in communication or self-expression. May have challenges finding the right word or naming objects. May also struggle to understand what others are saying and stop conversing, with no idea on how to continue.

D DISORIENTATION

- Confused about time and place. May mix up day and night, and read the time wrongly. For example, asking for lunch at night. May be unsure of whereabouts and feel frustrated in unfamiliar or noisy places.



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STAGES OF DEMENTIA

MILD

Common symptoms:

- Difficulty in planning and managing household affairs such as cleaning and cooking
- Difficulty in planning and initiating activities
- May become socially withdrawn or experience changes in mood
- Forgetting recent events and asking repetitive questions
- Can't remember the right word or name and has difficulty recalling
- Gets lost in unfamiliar places

WHAT TO DO

Coping strategies

- Create to-do lists and write notes as reminders
- Have a physical calendar and clock visible and accessible to help keep track of time and date

Establish support

- Participate in group and physical activities as much as possible
- Have a well-balanced diet and get enough rest
- Make regular phone calls to family and friends
- Maintain relations with community
- Maintain a normal routine

Medical care

- Consider appointing a Lasting Power of Attorney and discuss Advance Care Plans with family and doctor
- Continue to visit the doctor for consultation
- Take medication as prescribed

MODERATE

Common symptoms:

- Needs regular reminders and prompts in daily tasks
- Needs help in dressing, grooming, bathing and going to the toilet
- Easily upset and frustrated
- Difficulty with short- and long-term memory
- Difficulty in expressing emotions and making needs known
- Poor orientation of day, date or time
- Gets lost outdoors, even in familiar places

WHAT TO DO

Coping strategies

- Establish routines to help cope with failing memory, such as fixed times for shower and meals
- Make adjustments at home and in daily activities, such as installing grab bars in bathrooms and toilets

Establish support

- Consider wearing a tracking device to inform family of whereabouts
- Participate in regular activities to keep active and socially engaged, such as attending a dementia day care centre

Medical care

- If symptoms worsen, seek advice and rehabilitation from family doctor or specialist

SEVERE

Common symptoms:

- Problems with balance and coordination, resulting in instability and falls
- Total dependence in dressing, grooming, showering and feeding
- Trouble eating and swallowing
- Loss of bladder and bowel control
- Becoming apathetic, passive or withdrawn
- No apparent awareness of past or present
- Unable to engage in meaningful conversation

WHAT TO DO

Establish support

- Get help to perform daily activities such as bathing, dressing and grooming
- Ensure the physical living environment is pleasant and safe to prevent falls

- Create opportunities for outings where possible and enjoy them
- Get financial help from family or guardian

Medical care

- Choose to live at home or a nursing

- home, depending on the situation
- Maintain regular medical consultations
- Look out for suitable therapy sessions for continued engagement, such as music and art therapies

DEMENTIA-INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION

To build a supportive community for persons with dementia and their families, all it takes is patience and understanding.

Remember to be **KIND** when interacting with persons who show signs of dementia and need assistance.

- K** **Keep a lookout**
Familiarise yourself with the [signs of dementia](#) and keep a lookout for people who display them.
- I** **Interact with patience**
Speak softly and slowly. Be friendly and patient when waiting for a response. Give the reassurance that you are there to help.
- N** **Note their needs and offer help**
Guide them and check if they have some form of identification – such as the [CARA card](#), NRIC, EZ-link card, Passion card and Pioneer Generation card – or if they can recall the contact details of their next-of-kin.
- D** **Dial for help**
Call the next-of-kin where possible and keep chatting with the person with dementia until help arrives. You can also take them to the nearest Go-To-Point ([GTP](#)) for further assistance. As a last resort and in the event of an emergency, call the police at 999.

Remember the **CARE** approach when communicating with persons living with dementia.

- C** **Clear and simple language**
Be clear, simple and patient. Use short and simple sentences and speak at a slower pace.
- A** **Acknowledge their concerns**
Be attentive when listening and comfort them if they express worries.
- R** **Respect and reassure**
Introduce yourself with a smile and give the assurance that you are there to help.
- E** **Engage for comfort and trust**
Smile and maintain eye contact. Use a friendly and encouraging tone, giving them time to think and respond.





DEMENTIA-INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

The words we use can have a significant and lasting impact, so it is important to use the appropriate words. This is not just for the benefit of persons living with dementia, but also to change the mindset of the community towards the condition.

The appropriate language should be respectful, stigma-free, empowering, accurate and inclusive. Here's a list of preferred words and phrases:



When talking about persons with dementia

- | | |
|--|--|
| PREFERRED | AVOID |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Person/s with dementia• Person/s living with dementia• Person/s with a diagnosis of dementia | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demented person• Dementia patient• Victim• Sufferer |

When talking about persons with dementia under the age of 65

- | | |
|--|---|
| PREFERRED | AVOID |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Young onset of dementia• Young-onset dementia | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Early onset of dementia• Pre-senile dementia |

When discussing caregiving

- | | |
|---|---|
| PREFERRED | AVOID |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Impact/effect of supporting (someone) with dementia | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Burden of caregiving• Carer burden |

When discussing dementia

- | | |
|--|--|
| PREFERRED | AVOID |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dementia• Alzheimer's Disease and other forms of dementia• A type of dementia• Symptoms of dementia | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demented• Dementing illness• Affliction• Senile |

When discussing behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia

- | | |
|--|---|
| PREFERRED | AVOID |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expressions of unmet need/s• Responsive behaviour/s• Changed behaviour/s | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Challenging behaviours• Difficult behaviours• Aggressor |

When discussing impacts of dementia

- | | |
|---|--|
| PREFERRED | AVOID |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disabling• Challenging• Life-changing• Stressful | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hopeless• Unbearable• Devastating• Tragic |

When discussing dementia in medical context and research writings


- | | |
|--|---|
| PREFERRED | AVOID |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dementia as a condition• Person/s with a diagnosis of dementia• Participant (If in a research trial) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Disease (unless talking about a type of dementia, such as Alzheimer's disease)• Illness• Subject• Case |

More can be found at <https://dementia.org.sg/wordshurt>



STAGE 2: FRIENDLINESS


Employee training • Products and services • Enabling environment




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STAGE 2: FRIENDLINESS

As businesses take action to be dementia-friendly, staff are trained to support and handle the needs of customers with dementia, and the physical facilities and infrastructure of the store are adjusted to the needs of customers with dementia.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Here's a checklist to help you fulfil Stage 2

- ☐ Enable staff through dementia-related training
- ☐ Display dementia-related resources
- ☐ Provide customised products and services
- ☐ Provide dementia-enabling physical environment



Identifying customers with dementia

Besides raising awareness about dementia, being dementia-friendly means that your frontline staff is trained on how to identify and interact with persons with dementia.

It is not always easy to identify a person with dementia, and not all persons living with dementia are seniors. Some may appear confused and disoriented while others may not show symptoms. Some may approach you when they need help while others may prefer to keep their condition private.

Here are some signs to help you identify customers who may have dementia:

- They look confused and lost
- They may appear to require assistance with self-service facilities or when handling money
- Their speech may be hard to understand or they may struggle to find the words to express themselves
- They may not be able to understand what you are saying
- They may forget to pay before leaving your store



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EMPLOYEE TRAINING

Online and classroom training is available for organisations and businesses that want to increase their employees’ understanding of dementia and how to support persons with dementia and their carers.

Dementia Awareness Workshop

by Dementia Singapore (Formerly known as Alzheimer’s Disease Association)
This training aims to raise awareness and inform, teaching participants how to recognise and assist persons with dementia, and tap community resources for support.
(Call Dementia Singapore at 6377 0700 or go to <https://dementia.org.sg/academy>)

Enabling EDIE™

by Dementia Singapore
The 3-hour training lets participants walk in the shoes of persons with dementia via a Virtual Reality simulation and learn how to develop a support plan in partnership with persons living with dementia and carers.
(Call Dementia Singapore at 6377 0700 or go to <https://dementia.org.sg/academy>)

Facilitate Meaningful Interaction With Persons With Dementia

by Dementia Singapore
Participants will learn about the challenges faced by persons with dementia and how to engage them meaningfully through effective communication strategies based on a person-centred approach.
(Call Dementia Singapore at 6377 0700 or go to <https://dementia.org.sg/academy>)

*Interacting Effectively With Persons With Dementia

by Dementia Singapore in collaboration with Social Service Institute (SSI)
Delivered through an e-learning platform, this online training aims to equip social service professionals, carers and volunteers with an understanding of working with persons with dementia. Participants are introduced to different strategies of communicating and engaging with persons with dementia using the person-centred approach.
(Go to SSI Eldercare courses webpage at <https://www.ssi.gov.sg/training/eldercare>)

*Dementia Awareness Foundation Level E-Learning

by Agency for Integrated Care
Delivered through an e-learning platform, this online training aims to raise awareness and inform, teaching participants how to recognise and assist persons with dementia, and tap community resources for support.
(Go to <https://ccmhdcomms.github.io/dementiaawareness20/>)

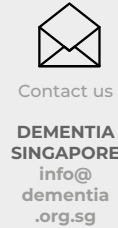
*Understanding Dementia

by University of Tasmania under the Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC)
The online training leverages the expertise of neuroscientists, clinicians and dementia-care professionals from the Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre and beyond. Learn about the diseases that cause dementia, how it impacts a person and how to provide the best quality care.
(Go to <https://www.utas.edu.au/wicking/understanding-dementia>)

*Preventing Dementia

by University of Tasmania under MOOC
Dementia is a major concern as the world population ages. Is it possible to lower your risk of dementia, which is linked to advanced ageing and genetic risk factors? Research has shown that risk factors can be altered. Preventing Dementia MOOC studies dementia-prevention, drawing on expertise from around the world. The online training is suitable for everyone.
(Go to <https://www.utas.edu.au/wicking/preventing-dementia>)

*These courses are complimentary.



Tip

If your employees are 50 years old and above, they may be able to tap on the National Silver Academy (NSA) subsidy for the following workshops by Dementia Singapore:

- Dementia Awareness Workshop
- Enabling EDIE™
- Facilitate Meaningful Interaction with Persons with Dementia

Check out the NSA website for more information (<https://www.nsa.org.sg>)

More training

Dementia Singapore offers customised training and consultation that can be tailored to your organisational needs. For more information, go to <https://dementia.org.sg/academy> or send an email to academy@dementia.org.sg



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TRAINING RESOURCES: VIDEOS

There are videos with tips and anecdotes by and for carers on how to support people with dementia, and how businesses from different sectors can support customers and employees impacted by dementia.


Building dementia-inclusive communities

<https://youtu.be/wlOYCoXsc78>




Tips and personal stories by and for carers on how best to support persons with dementia

<https://www.forgetusnot.sg/videos.html>



Interacting with persons with dementia in F&B

<https://youtu.be/vHUIdaoYdfg>



Interacting with persons with dementia in retail

<https://youtu.be/PU0ePz1XYNY>



Managing persons with dementia for private-hire vehicle operators

<https://youtu.be/vebPSS2SxTs>



Managing persons with dementia for train operators

<https://youtu.be/fz1iUlks-fU>



Managing persons with dementia for bus operators

https://youtu.be/TLq7Of5s_PM





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PROVIDE CUSTOMISED PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

Businesses in different sectors have different considerations when engaging customers impacted by dementia. The list on the facing page includes some examples of dedicated services and customised products adopted by local and overseas businesses. The possibilities are limitless. What it takes is a little imagination and the passion to serve your customers who are impacted by dementia.



EXAMPLES OF CUSTOMISED SERVICES AND PRODUCTS



Arts, culture and heritage
Screening of classic films where singing and chatting while the movie is playing are not frowned upon ([Dementia-friendly cinemas across the UK](#))



Financial Services
Banking for customers living with dementia to retain access to a bank account that has limited features and additional control by a legal designee ([HSBC Hong Kong](#))



Food and Beverage
Menu with bright photos and catchy titles ([Amazing Joe restaurant in Columbus Indiana US](#))



Healthcare
Ward and counter staff trained to interact with patients with dementia and provide continuity of care ([Sector guide by ACT on Alzheimer's](#))



Retail
Checkout managed by staff trained to ensure that the shopping experience is made easier for customers with dementia ([Tesco, Chester UK](#))



Sports, leisure and parks
Therapeutic garden featuring plants specially selected for their ability to stimulate the senses and act as a signpost for those with dementia if they get confused ([Hort Park by National Parks Board Singapore](#))



Transport
Transport Assistance Cards – Cards that record details of the needs of the person with dementia so that the user can show the card privately to the driver or other travel staff to seek assistance ([Individual transport operators and local authorities in the UK](#))



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SINGAPORE

Inclusive transport network

The 2040 Land Transport Masterplan unveiled in May 2019 aimed to create a more inclusive transport network for Singapore, motivating SMRT to step up its efforts in enabling its staff to help commuters with dementia and disabilities.

By 2020, SMRT Buses employees had received training from ADA, Agency for Integrated Care (AIC), Guide Dogs Singapore and Handicaps Welfare Association on how to approach and help

commuters with dementia and disabilities.

SMRT also studied selected bus interchanges and MRT stations to ensure that the environment was conducive for commuters with dementia or disabilities, developing Yishun Integrated Transport Hub and Woodlands Temp Bus Interchange into [Go-To-Points](#) (recognised by AIC as a place where members of the public can take persons with dementia to for assistance from trained staff).

TAIWAN

Dementia-friendly stores

There have been efforts to promote dementia-friendliness in stores in Taiwan.

Staff at these stores understand the impact of dementia on the daily functioning of their customers and make provisions to accommodate them with a shopping experience as comfortable and dignified as possible.

For instance, persons with dementia who struggle with making sense of prices do not have to make payment for purchases at dementia-

friendly stores. These stores subsequently collect payment from the customers' carers.

Persons with dementia may also make repeated purchases of the same item. Dementia-friendly stores allow the customers' carers to return or exchange the purchased item for other items.

These efforts to support persons with dementia and their carers allow persons with dementia to continue leading active lives and interacting with their environments.

HONG KONG

HSBC accounts for persons with dementia

Persons with dementia may struggle with financial management as it requires high-level cognitive functions. Some of them are even suspicious of banks.

In response to this, HSBC Hong Kong rolled out the HSBC Basic Banking Account with Independence (BBAI) in May 2019 to give customers with dementia access to a bank account that has limited features and additional control by legal designees.

The legal designees can top up the accounts so that the account holders can still enjoy basic banking features such as cash withdrawal and paying with an ATM card.

This empowers customers with

dementia to manage their everyday finances independently and helps them retain some semblance of control over their life and feel included.

It also guards against financial mismanagement by customers with impaired cognitive capacity and who struggle with understanding bank documents, remembering PIN, and communicating with bank staff.

HSBC HK also trained more than 200 Dementia Friends Ambassadors. These ambassadors have a better understanding of the difficulties faced by persons with dementia when using banking services, and can offer useful advice.

MALAYSIA

Mall raises awareness on dementia

Atria Shopping Gallery in Petaling Jaya became the first dementia-friendly community mall in Malaysia when it launched the Atria Community Corner in September 2017, in collaboration with the Alzheimer's Disease Foundation Malaysia (ADFM).

The community corner helped raise awareness of dementia through educational talks on the condition as well as health- and

ageing-related matters for carers of persons living with dementia, senior citizens, and the general public.

The mall also held weekly exercises, games and activities, as well as sing-along sessions for persons with dementia, their families and carers, and senior citizens. Such activities served to provide information and support to the communities in the area.



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Tips

- Help can come in two ways:
1. Proactively reaching out to those who may need help by approaching them, and
 2. Having a prominent helpdesk to encourage persons with dementia or carers to approach for help.

CREATE A DEMENTIA-ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

When the physical environment of your store is dementia-enabling, it gives persons with dementia and their carers the confidence to visit your business. Even minor adjustments, such as in lighting and signage, can go a long way in creating a calming and supportive environment for customers with dementia. Here are some key design principles⁴ to consider. Their relevance to some common areas in our physical environment will be elaborated in the following pages.

- 1

Design safety measures to be as discreet as possible
- 2

Design the scale of the environment to maximise comfort and security
- 3

Make it easy for people to see where they are going
- 4

Minimise unhelpful stimuli
- 5

Optimise helpful stimuli
- 6

Create an environment – indoor and outdoor – that is easy for engagement and safe to navigate
- 7

Design components of the environment to be as familiar as possible
- 8

Offer people opportunities to choose to be alone or with different numbers of people
- 9

Provide access and connection to and from local communities
- 10

Design to support a way of life that is easy to understand, manageable and meaningful

⁴ Fleming R., Zeisel J., & Bennett K. (2020). Design dignity dementia: Dementia-related design and the built environment. Vol. I and II. London: Alzheimer's Disease International: <https://www.alzint.org/resource/world-alzheimer-report-2020>



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ENVIRONMENTAL AUDIT

Assess your environment and identify areas to improve to make it dementia-enabling. This audit should cover the entire journey – from approaching your store premises to right through it, all the way to the exit.

Step 1

Put yourself in the shoes of a person with dementia or a carer taking a person with dementia to your store premises. (Tip: Remember the [symptoms](#) a person with dementia may be experiencing, such as problems with visual perception, forgetfulness and challenges in physical mobility.)

Step 2

Define the purpose of the visit (e.g. medical appointment at a hospital, shopping for groceries in a supermarket or borrowing books from a library).

Step 3

Identify the most likely route your customer with dementia would take.

Step 4

Start the journey about 20 metres away from the entrance of your store. This allows you to assess the visibility of your store and ease of getting to it, from outside.

Step 5

Bear in mind the [key design principles](#) when marking common areas of the environment, in and outside your store, to be improved.

Tips

- Consider doing the environmental check at different times of the day, especially if your business is conducted outdoors and depends on natural light.
- Check out the video “Shopping in their Shoes – becoming a dementia-friendly retailer” by East England Co-op (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nAIVM3Jc0sE>)

Additional resource

- [Six Principles of Dementia-Friendly Neighbourhood by Singapore University of Technology and Design, Lee Kuan Yew Centre for Innovative Cities](#)

Be inclusive

As you build your business to be dementia-friendly, invite persons with dementia and their carers to be part of the process. This ensures that whatever you hope to do will take their experiences into account.

Here are some common areas to focus on, where possible, when creating a dementia-enabling physical environment

Lighting

Persons with dementia need to see their surroundings to help them make sense of it and to make the most of their remaining abilities. Better lighting helps avoid confusion and reduces the risk of falls.

What you can do:

1. Avoid using lights that cause glare, dark shadows or are highly reflective
2. Ensure area is well lit and bright by having more light fittings rather than fewer brighter ones
3. Ensure consistent lighting throughout your store and use natural daylight where possible

Corresponding key design principles:

- Minimise unhelpful stimuli
- Optimise helpful stimuli



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Walkways & flooring

Dementia changes how the brain processes visual information. This impact is compounded by poor eyesight which often occurs in ageing. Persons with dementia require an environment that is clear and safe.

Walkways

1. Provide a well-defined pathway that's free of obstacles and has clear and simple signage or landmarks

Tip: Landmarks such as a prominent landscape or a helpdesk can help in wayfinding

2. Ensure that the path is wide enough to let two wheelchairs pass side by side

Flooring

Ensure that floors are non-slip, non-reflective and free of patterns

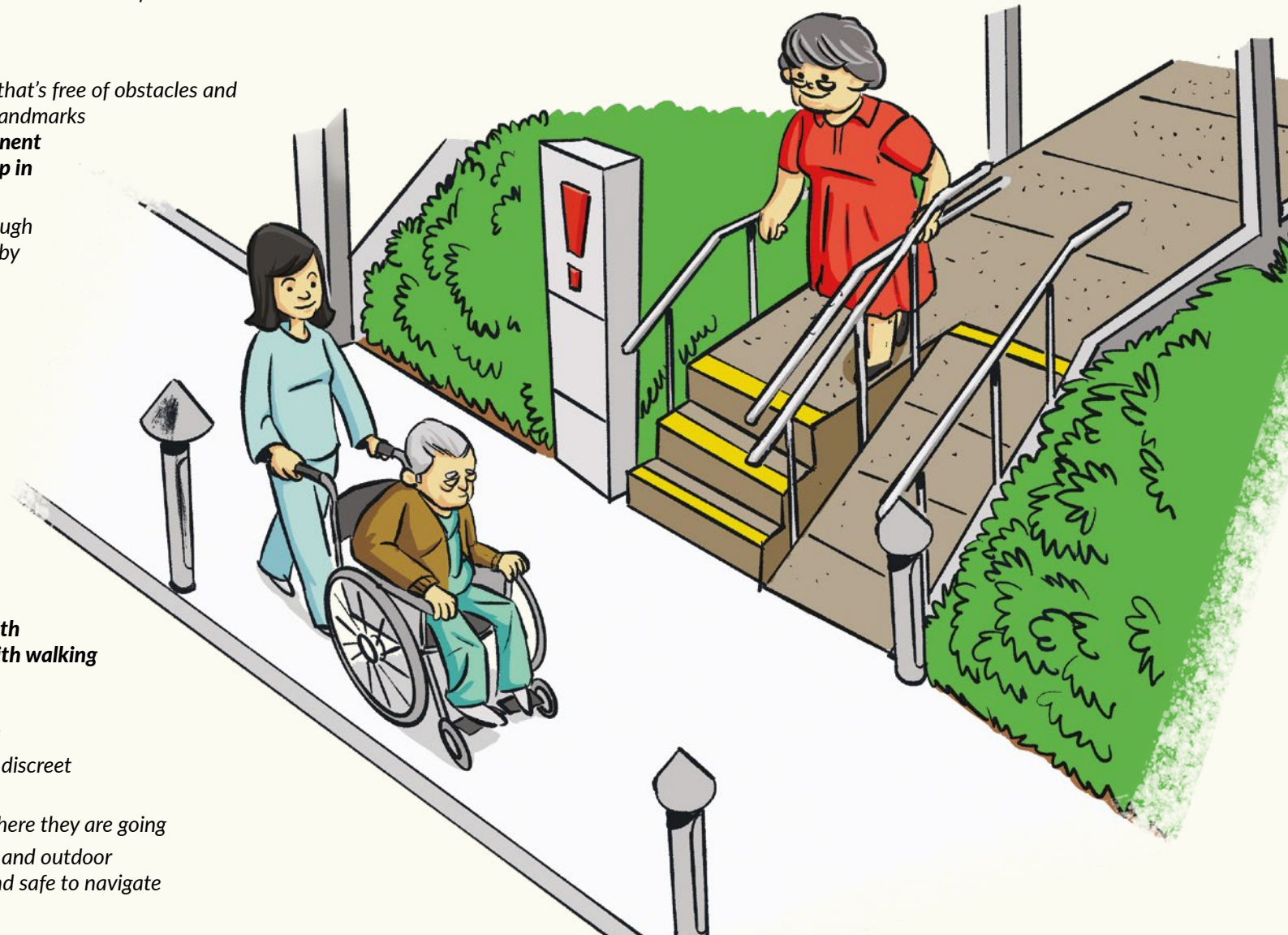
Uneven surface levels

Mark clearly areas with uneven floor levels, such as stairs, kerbs, and small steps. Install non-reflective and colour-contrasting handrails at those points

Tip: Where feasible, replace steps with ramps so persons in wheelchair or with walking aid can move with ease

Corresponding key design principles:

- Design safety measures to be as discreet as possible
- Make it easy for people to see where they are going
- Create an environment – indoor and outdoor – that is easy for engagement and safe to navigate



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Noise levels & other external stimulations

As dementia progresses, the brain may struggle with processing different sounds, smells and sights. Support to minimise confusion and uncertainty can help persons with dementia live well and independently.

What you can do:

1. Make an environment comfortable by being mindful of its size, sounds, sights and smells

Tip: Large stores can consider creating small sections to limit the number of people to help persons with dementia feel more at ease, and where possible, engage persons with dementia in a quiet and private meeting area instead of an open meeting space

2. Reduce visual and aural clutter, such as unnecessary noise, signs, posters, advertising and merchandise

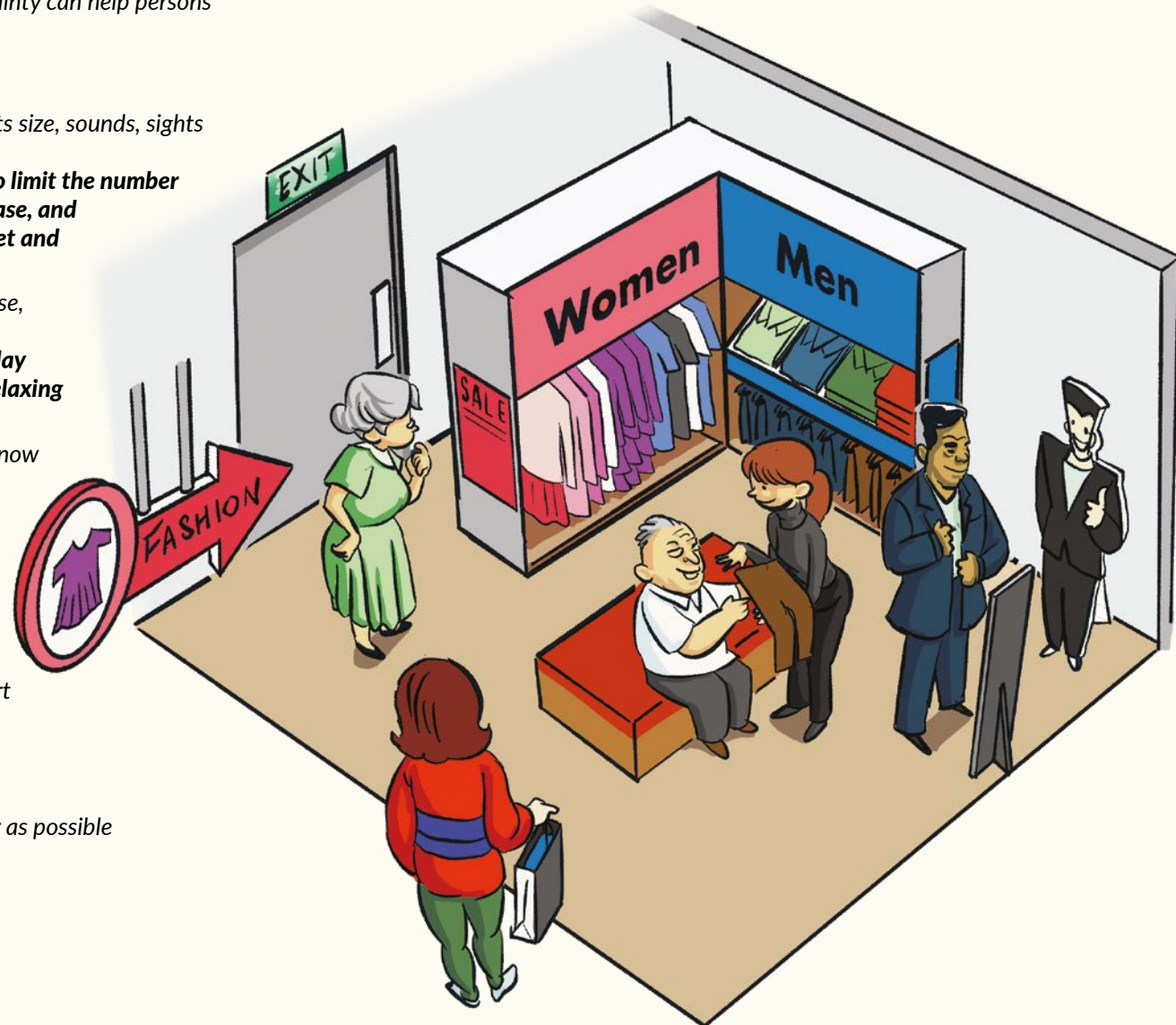
Tip: Remove unnecessary standee or point-of-sale display and consider replacing loud music with soothing and relaxing tunes

3. Provide adequate visual cues at eye level to help them know where they are and what they can do in your store

Tip: Help them recognise your business or store by highlighting the entry or using distinctive finishes. Remember that people with dementia feel most comfortable in familiar surroundings

Corresponding key design principles:

- Design the scale of the environment to maximise comfort and security
- Minimise unhelpful stimuli
- Optimise helpful stimuli
- Design components of the environment to be as familiar as possible



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Seating & resting areas



Persons with dementia need to be able to choose to be on their own or with others.

What you can do:

1. Ensure there are enough seats, especially in waiting areas
2. Ensure the seats are sturdy, made of common materials, with appropriate height (e.g. not too low), complete with back and arm rests
3. Colours of the seats should contrast with the floor and walls so that they are prominent
4. Seats should be obvious and do not look like part of decor
5. Public spaces are designed with opportunities for persons with dementia to participate in or observe activities of interest
6. Set aside a space or room so that there is a choice for the person with dementia to withdraw from the larger areas and crowd to be on their own, or in a smaller place with fewer people

Corresponding key design principles:

- Create options for people to be alone or with different numbers of people
- Design components of the environment to be as familiar as possible
- Optimise helpful stimuli



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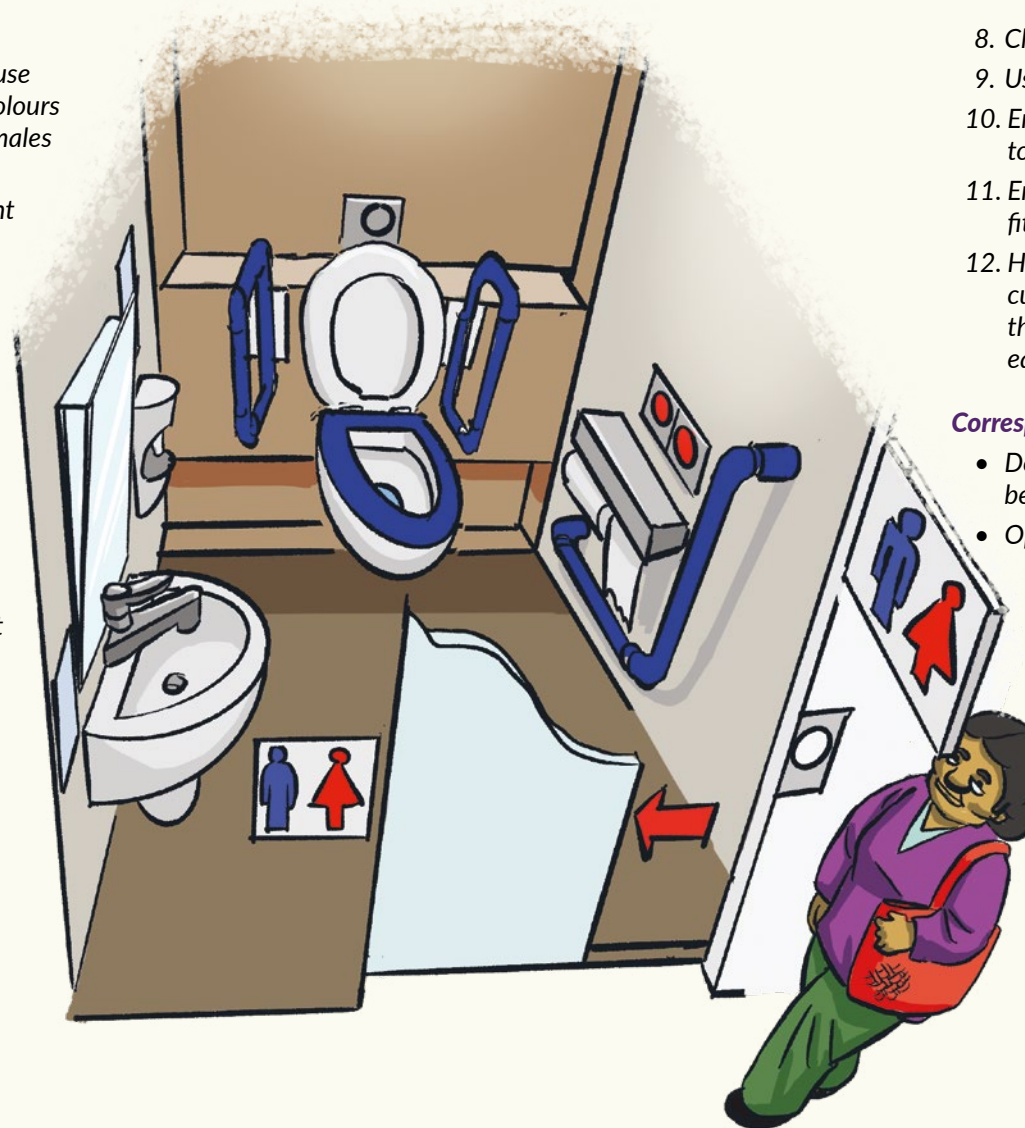
Inclusiveness

Toilets

Having enough well-designed toilets can help persons with dementia maintain their independence and dignity in personal care.

What you can do:

1. Have clear entrance and exit signs, use common symbols and contrasting colours to differentiate between toilets for males and females
2. Access to toilets should be prominent from as many viewpoints as possible
3. Provide unisex disability toilets. Avoid using the handicap sign to empower even persons with hidden disabilities to use them
4. Disability toilets should be big enough to accommodate a wheelchair
5. Install grab rails in colours that contrast with the walls and floor
6. Toilet seat should be in a colour that contrasts with the toilet bowl and floor
7. Use common or automatic flush systems



8. Clearly label taps and soap dispensers
9. Use non-reflective surfaces
10. Ensure there is adequate lighting in the toilets
11. Ensure contrast between fixtures and fittings, doors and surroundings
12. Have a user-activated alarm system in cubicles for emergency assistance. Ensure that the alarm system is clearly visible, easy to use and accessible to the user

Corresponding key design principles:

- Design components of the environment to be as familiar as possible
- Optimise helpful stimuli



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Signage

Good, enabling signage can benefit the well-being of persons with dementia, guiding them to their destination or providing them with cues to complete a task.

What you can do:

1. Ensure entrance, exit and helpdesk signs are clean, clear, well-lit and easily identified, both near and from a distance
2. Ensure the glass doors are clearly marked
3. Provide clear and simple signage with appropriate symbols and large font against contrasting background (e.g. black text against a yellow background)
4. Use simple wording and sentence case instead of everything in uppercase
5. Fix signs at eye level and key decision points – this is especially helpful for someone who is there for the first time
Tip: Older people tend to lower their gaze, so it is recommended that your signage be placed slightly lower than normal, at about 1.2-1.4 metres from the floor
6. Fix signs on doors – instead of adjacent walls – to indicate where they lead to
7. Install recognisable images or cues to assist persons with dementia to complete any task (e.g. how to operate the tap and soap dispenser in the toilet)
8. Display posters on dementia to remind others to be kind and offer help when needed

Corresponding key design principles:

- *Make it easy for people to see where they are going*
- *Optimise helpful stimuli*
- *Create an environment – indoor and outdoor – that is easy for engagement and safe to navigate*
- *Design components of the environment to be as familiar as possible*



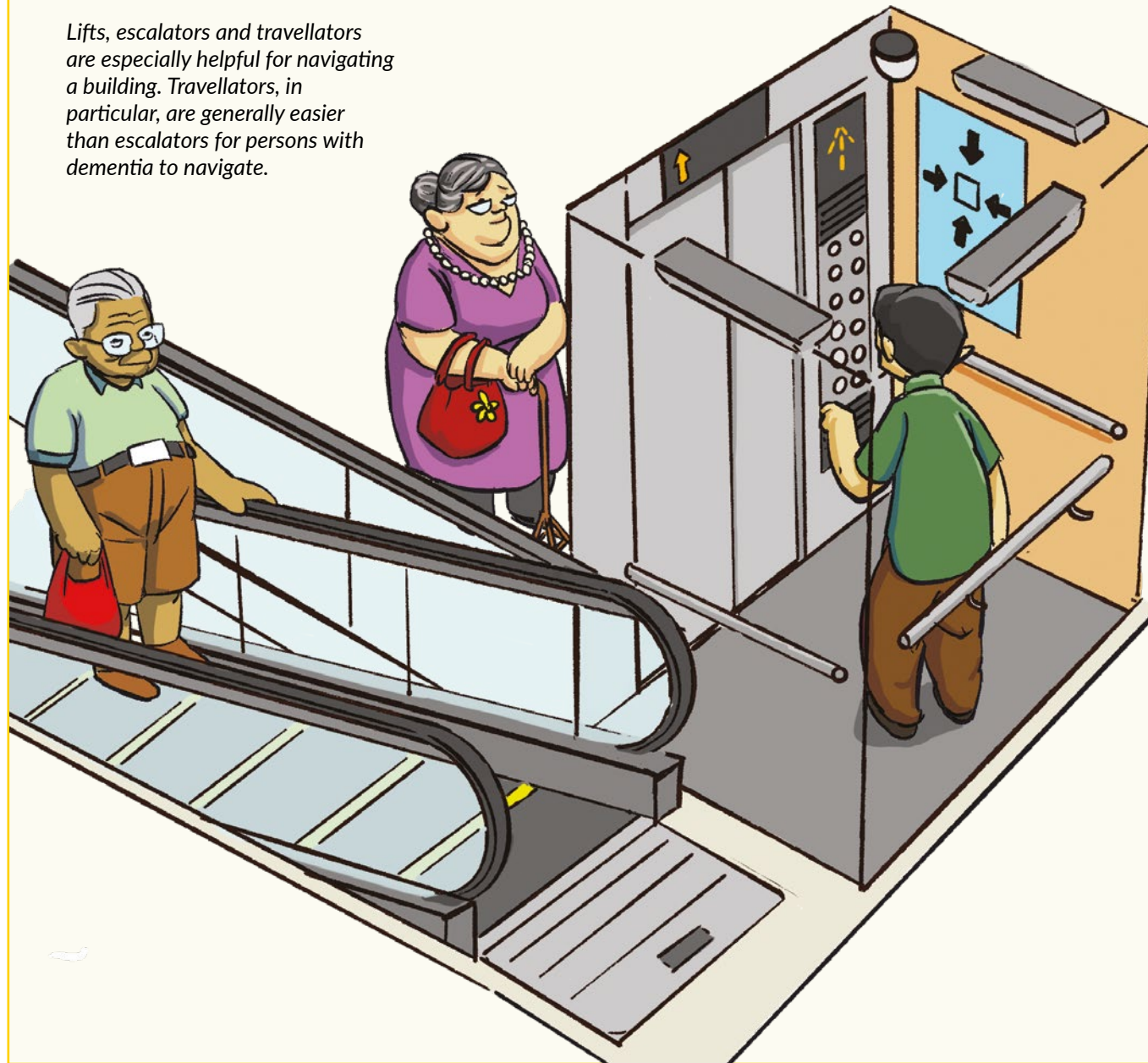
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Lifts, escalators, travellers

Lifts, escalators and travellers are especially helpful for navigating a building. Travellers, in particular, are generally easier than escalators for persons with dementia to navigate.



What you can do:

1. Ensure that lifts are centrally located and easily accessible
Tip: Provide adequate and appropriate signage leading to lifts
2. Ensure contrast between lift doors and its surroundings
3. Lift interior should be pastel-coloured, and avoid mirrors and reflective or shiny surfaces
4. Lighting in the lift should be bright and uniform
Tip: Avoid light diffuser panels as these tend to cast shadows which can be misinterpreted as holes or objects
5. Lift buttons should be big and clear, contrasting with the surrounding area, and easy and intuitive to use
6. Install a lift announcement system that clearly advises passengers of their location, door movements and arrival at their destination
Tip: Take extra care that the lift announcements do not startle or confuse passengers
7. Provide an emergency communication device in lifts for trapped passengers to communicate externally
8. Lifts should be equipped with sensors to keep the doors open and avoid abrupt closure

Corresponding key design principles:

- Design safety measures to be as discreet as possible
- Make it easy for people to see where they are going
- Minimise unhelpful stimuli
- Optimise helpful stimuli



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STAGE 3: INCLUSIVENESS

Support for employees • Spotlight: Apex Harmony Lodge

STAGE 3: INCLUSIVENESS

To become dementia-inclusive, businesses take steps to support not only customers, but also employees impacted by dementia. This includes hiring and retaining employees with dementia, and providing support to employees who are carers to persons with dementia. A truly inclusive business leaves no one behind.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Here's a checklist to help you fulfil Stage 3

- ☐ Support employees who are carers
- ☐ Support employees with dementia
- ☐ Employ persons with dementia
- ☐ Appoint dementia ambassadors
- ☐ Work with national dementia-support organisations like Dementia Singapore

Support employees who are carers

Policies and processes supporting employees who are carers to persons with dementia can contribute to staff retention, lower recruitment cost, and increased productivity and revenue. Here are some ways to show you care:



Recruitment and selection

- Ensure that recruitment and selection of employees are based on merit (knowledge, skills and experience needed for the job)
- Encourage potential candidates to be upfront about caregiving challenges that the company might need to make provisions for
- Openly negotiate the provisions the company can or cannot make so that both employee and company are clear about each other's expectations – this not only signals mutual respect but also saves both parties time and money



Job design and adjustments

Potential or existing employees with caregiving duties may need a customised job scope and adjustments to their work requirements, such as working from home instead of in the office, flexible work hours and job-sharing. These provisions enable carers to juggle their work and caregiving commitments.



Training and development

- Enrol staff in training that enable them to communicate and support colleagues with dementia. Encourage employees who are carers to share their experience and indicate the support they need
- Engage employees with caregiving responsibilities and find ways to help them cope with their caregiving commitment amid their pursuit of career development.
- Provide options, such as temporary reassignments, during critical moments of caregiving



Compensation and benefits

- Compensation and benefits should be fair and commensurate with job requirements
- Make leeway for time off in times of emergency and consider caregiving leave for self-care or medical appointments
- Give tokens such as vouchers for respite care to assure staff that their well-being matters



Performance management

- Supervisors should practise open communication regularly with employees who are carers to keep up with their caregiving situation and adjust the work scope accordingly if needed
- Performance should be measured based on deliverables and not visibility within the organisation



Employee well-being

- Start a peer-support group for employees who are carers
- Organise wellness programmes and talks that focus on caregiving tips
- Referring staff to national dementia-support organisations like Dementia Singapore, which can provide counselling or intervention support for employees



Handling grievance

Create an avenue for employees to provide feedback on discriminatory practices without negative repercussions

Tip

Besides these practices, visible commitment from the leadership and active communication of inclusive practices and policies are crucial for the creation of a dementia-inclusive work culture. Appointing trained dementia ambassadors and go-to people for dementia-related issues will ease a business' transition into dementia-inclusiveness.



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Support employees with dementia

As the population ages and the rate of young-onset dementia diagnosis increases, the number of employees with dementia will also inevitably increase. Support for employees with dementia helps them retain independence and dignity.

A dementia diagnosis does not necessarily mean that they can no longer do their job. With adequate support, adjustments, respect and understanding, employees with dementia, especially those at the early stages of the condition, can still work.

Businesses can develop a clear pathway of support, both for their employees with dementia and their families. Such inclusive practices not only benefit the employees with dementia but also businesses, as research^{5, 6, 7} has found that inclusive leadership and organisational team climates result in higher levels of innovation and productivity.

Here are ways businesses can support employees with dementia:

Recruitment and selection

- Implement employment practices that are fair, merit-based (such as skills, experience or ability to perform the job) and do not discriminate persons with dementia
- Develop job family suitable for employees with dementia, and provide clear job descriptions and key deliverables

Diversity and inclusion

Create an inclusive and diverse workplace with dementia-awareness education and advocacy

Job redesign and adjustments

- Consider job modifications, re-assignments, and part-time employment where possible
- Provide flexible working hours and location of work to accommodate symptoms and ensure safety

Physical work environment

- Support persons with dementia by initiating discussions on how the environment can be improved to help them with their work
- Modify the working environment to incorporate dementia-enabling design principles. Examples include rearranging workspaces to create quiet spaces within the work environment, or allowing a work-from-home arrangement if possible
- Provide clear labelling and signage

Food for thought

Some people may not know they have dementia or have yet to be formally diagnosed. Non-discriminatory and inclusive efforts should be extended to all, with or without a dementia diagnosis.

⁵ Javed B., Abdullah I., Zaffar M. A., Haque A. U., & Rubab U. (2019). Inclusive leadership and innovative work behavior: The role of psychological empowerment. *Journal of Management & Organization*, 25, 554-571.

⁶ Rashid A., Nawaz S., & Zaman U. (2020). Examining the effect of inclusive climate on public health official's creative performance: Mediating role of innovation climate. *Journal of Public Affairs*. DOI: 10.1002/pa.2273.

⁷ Ye Q., Wang D., & Guo W. (2019). Inclusive leadership and team innovation: The role of team voice and performance pressure. *European Management Journal*, 37, 468-480.



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Training and development

- Provide refresher training to re-enable employees with dementia to perform their tasks
- Ensure support during trainings for employees with dementia, and that trainers are informed and materials are adjusted accordingly, such as using larger prints and assistive aids
- Provide training for other employees so they are aware of the condition of colleagues with dementia, and know how to support and interact with them

Supervision and mentoring

- Consider a buddy-support system or mentors for employees whose dementia may cause uncertainty or lack of confidence at work
- Give extra guidance and supervision to ensure employees with dementia can adapt to changes

Performance appraisal

- Establish suitable appraisal criteria to ensure fair assessment of employees with dementia, such as placing greater emphasis on attitude instead of tangible results, and have supervisors encourage feedback for positive reinforcement
- Practice a dementia-informed and non-punitive appraisal process
- Have clear guidelines for supervisors and human resources on conducting performance appraisals for employees with dementia to reduce bias

Compensation and benefits

- Compensation and benefits should be fair and commensurate with job requirements
- Do not differentiate compensation and benefits among employees with dementia performing the same job role

Employee support and well-being

Support during the dementia diagnostic process is especially important, together with giving respect, time and privacy as employee with dementia come to terms with the diagnosis. Support in this area can include:

- Providing allowances for absence and medical leave
- Providing support to family members
- If there is more than one employee with dementia, consider creating a dementia support group involving both employees with dementia and carers to persons with dementia, and other employees interested in the topic of dementia
- Referring employees to national dementia-support organisations, like Dementia Singapore, including working with all parties involved on a possible transition plan so employees with dementia are adequately supported



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Apex Harmony Lodge

Established in 1999, Apex Harmony Lodge is a community committed to empowering lives impacted by dementia, providing long-term residential, day and community care services for persons with dementia. Using a strength-based, person-

centred and integrated approach to dementia care, AHL is the first purpose-built lodge for persons with dementia in Singapore and is the first local organisation to provide them with therapeutic employment. Therapy Through Work (TTW) was

the first of its kind when it started in 2013. It enabled residents to achieve psychosocial well-being through re-cultivating purposeful lives, promoting independence, and contributing to normalised living through curated work activities.

Recognising the benefits of TTW, it was in 2018 expanded to Therapy Through Work For People With Young Onset & Early-Stage Dementia (TTW YES) to include persons with young onset and early-stage dementia. TTW YES offers therapeutic

employment to promote well-being and ability-appropriate engagement for people with dementia with a strong need for occupation. It is grounded on Kitwood's person-centered care, in which occupation is identified as one of six psychological needs⁸.

By meeting one's need for occupation, meaningful engagement can be created through stimulating tasks and social interaction. Especially in Singapore, work is a fundamental aspect of society that furnishes an individual with acceptance, identity, social status and self-worth.

TTW YES participants work up to three days a week, sometimes with multiple employers depending on the need and availability. They are paid hourly rates or by the amount of work done. AHL staff are on hand to facilitate the work sessions and are assisted by dedicated community volunteers. Carers may also volunteer to co-facilitate.

Companies in the programme are from various industries including F&B and horticulture. The companies

identify suitable tasks, such as food preparation, packing and seeding, and work with AHL to identify participants.

The first company to come on board was Orchid Laundry, hiring participants to fold towels at its headquarters in Tuas. Other companies include social enterprise Flour Power, food stalls at Our Tampines Hub, Systematic Holding, ComCrop and Greenology.

The positive impact of this initiative has been apparent among the participants. With the work therapy to look forward to, they're livelier and more alert, surpassing expectations on their abilities.

Even people who were in contact with the participants displayed positive changes, such as the bus drivers who over time became more patient when ferrying the workers to their workplaces. Employees of participating companies also showed greater compassion and understanding towards the participants.

Companies keen to join this initiative may send an email to AHL at ahl@apexharmony.org.sg

⁸ Kitwood T. (1997). *Dementia reconsidered: The person comes first*. Berkshire, UK: Open University Press.

Acknowledgements:

1. *Authors Mary-Ann Khoo, Consultant in the CEO's Office at Dementia Singapore, and Dr Angeline Lim*
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