

Supporting Dementia-Friendly Communities

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Outline

- Dementia Facts, Figures and Context
- Overview of Dementia-Friendly Communities
- Raising Dementia Awareness
- Enhancing Social Connectedness
- Strategies for Program Development
- Resources
- Q&A

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Nearly 7 million Americans live with dementia

Over 11 million Americans provide care to a loved one with dementia

The majority live in their homes in the community

Source: Alzheimer's Disease Facts & Figures 2024

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Dementia-Friendly Communities

Dementia-friendly communities are...

Communities in which people with memory loss fully belong and have the opportunity to participate and contribute.

More info:
www.DFAmerica.org



Photo Jim Lee Carey

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9 Key Factors

In a dementia-friendly community, people with memory loss...

1. Are **respected** as valuable members of the community.
2. Can **participate confidently** in their communities – their neighborhoods, stores, restaurants, banks, libraries, schools, hospitals and more - knowing that the people who live and work there are dementia-aware.
3. **Stay connected** to their family, friends and neighbors, while having the chance to develop new relationships.
4. **Enjoy meaningful lives**, with access to education, recreation, work or volunteer opportunities, cultural enrichment, and more.
5. **Have a voice** in their community and a leadership role in anything particularly impacting the lives of people with memory loss.
6. **Have access** to early diagnosis and post-diagnostic resources for themselves and their loved ones, including medical care, education and support, financial/legal services, and advance care planning.
7. **Have transportation options** that help them stay involved in their community.
8. **Have community housing options** that provide the level of support they want, in the setting they desire.
9. **Can navigate neighborhoods** and public spaces because the physical environment is supportive and clear.

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PUBLIC AWARENESS / STIGMA REDUCTION

Have community housing options that provide level of dementia care and support.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIAL / CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

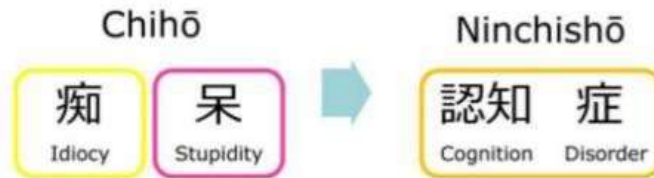
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Ninchisho Supporters: Japan

New word for dementia, 2004

Nationwide Caravan for Ninchisho Supporters, 2005

- Train the trainer model
- 90-minute public seminars
- Purpose to raise awareness, reduce stigma, build community-based support
- 8,829,946 Ninchisho Supporters by 2017



<http://www.ncgg.go.jp/topics/dementia/documents/Topic4-4HirokoSugawara.pdf>

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'Run Tomo' relay event: Japan

- Launched by Dementia Friendship Club in 2014
- Relay runs across cities from Hokkaido to Okinawa
- In 2017, 14,500 people participated in running events across 41 cities
- 1,600+ were people with dementia
- Raising awareness, challenging stigma, creating work opportunities for persons with dementia



www.runtomo.org

www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2018/09/14/national/run-tomo-event-takes-steps-toward-building-dementia-inclusive-japan/#.W7_QwHtKhaQ

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Dementia Friends: UK

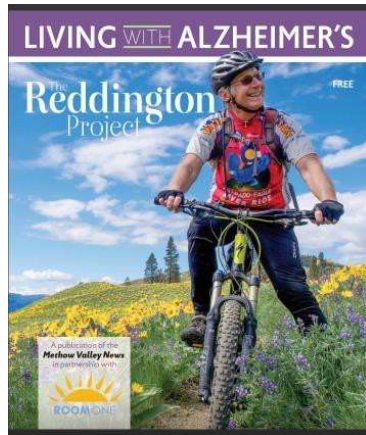
- Launched in 2013
- Community trainings or online
- Five key messages:
 - Dementia is not a natural part of aging
 - It is caused by diseases of the brain
 - It impacts more than memory
 - It is possible to live well with dementia
 - There is more to the person than the dementia
- Over 3 million Dementia Friends within 5 years



www.alz.co.uk/dementia-friendly-communities/dementia-friends

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The Reddington Project: Twisp, WA



"Although some days are better than others, my goal is to enjoy life and remember that 'Life is good.'"

~Don Reddington

<https://issuu.com/methowvalleypublishing/docs/livingwithalzheimers>

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Ride 4 Alzheimer's: WA State

July 2017, 10 days

Rallies in 6 cities:

- Bellingham
- Seattle
- Olympia / Lacey
- Yakima
- Spokane
- Wenatchee

500 magazines distributed



<http://ride4alzheimers.net/>

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Living with Memory Loss Portrait and Video Project: Seattle

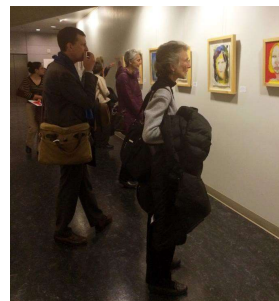


<https://www.phinneycenter.org/memoryloss-film/>

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The Art of Alzheimer's Exhibit: Seattle

- Launched in 2016
- 50 pieces of art created by persons with dementia ages 60 – 101.
- Exhibit shown at Seattle City Hall, Harborview Medical Center, UW School of Social Work, Washington State Convention Center, Seattle Center



<http://www.theartofalzheimers.net/>

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Dementia Friends WA: Overview

- A project of the Dementia Action Collaborative, led by the UW Memory and Brain Wellness Center
- Addressing Alz State Plan Recommendation 1.B.1: *To promote positive images and messages of persons with dementia and their caregivers to combat stigma and increase societal acceptance and integration.*
- Received state license in September 2018 from USAging
- Completed evaluation in 2018-2019; found promising results for addressing stigma



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Dementia Friends WA in 2025

- State funding supports program manager
- Program operating in 25 counties (dark green on map)
- Over 3500 people have attended a Dementia Friends session
- Goal to reach 5000 people by June 2025
- Translations into Spanish and Mandarin



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Bridges Bistro Pilot Program - Seattle

- Based on Restaurant of Mistaken Orders in Japan
- Pilot program in December 2024 offered a “pop up” experience by invitation
- 8 people with memory loss volunteered as servers in a public restaurant
- Goal is to provide a meaningful volunteer experience that promotes dementia awareness in the public
- Partnership between UW Memory and Brain Wellness Center and Murano Senior Living



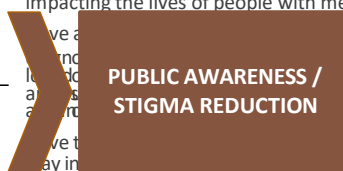
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Have a voice in their community and a leadership role in anything particularly impacting the lives of people with memory loss.



Have community housing options that provide the level of support they need.



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“Stay active and stay social”

“At one point, my doctor told me, ‘Stay active, and stay social.’

That’s the best advice I’ve gotten anywhere.”

~Mary F
Seattle WA



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The Alzheimer’s Café: The Netherlands

- Established by psychiatrist Bere Miesen in the Netherlands in 1997
- European model included dementia-focused presentations and resources, alongside a social gathering
- Focus on breaking through stigma and allowing for discussion

“The Alzheimer’s cafe is an informal way to make contact with each other, to receive a consultation and feel at home. In the Netherlands, patients feel they have a place to just be. This way the patient and their family don’t have to deny or avoid the illness.”

~Bere Miesen,
The Guardian, Nov 22, 2000

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The Alzheimer's Café – American Model

- Model came to the United States with Dr. Jytte Lokvig in 2008
- American model focused more on social support and enjoyment
- 2nd Alzheimer's Café in the nation started in Seattle, WA in 2010 with Greenwood Senior Center



Frye Art Museum. Photo: Olli Tumelius

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Memory Cafe Alliance 2025

Aiming to expand Memory Cafes in the US from 900 to 9000 over 10 years

New national directory hosted by Dementia Friendly America

Community-centric training system with options to train on your own or with a group cohort

Learn more at

www.memorycafedirectory.com



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Momentia Seattle

A grassroots movement empowering people with memory loss and their loved ones to stay active and connected in the community...

Through dementia-friendly programs!



www.MomentiaSeattle.org

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Collaborative & Community-based

- Community members guide and advise program development
- Community organizations partner to offer dementia-friendly programs based on community interest
- Programs are promoted through joint website and Facebook page maintained by community members and organizational partners



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Using Public Spaces

- Libraries
- Museums
- Art galleries
- Theaters
- Cafes and restaurants
- Senior centers
- Community centers
- Parks
- Faith communities
- And more!



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Incorporating Strengths

- Procedural “how-to” memory, emotional memory, memories of distant past
- Present moment awareness
- Multiple senses: vision, hearing, touch
- Physical movement
- Nonverbal communication
- Imagination and creativity
- Wisdom built up throughout life



Photo: Ryan Hawke. Seattle Parks and Recreation

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Art Gallery Discussions

- Weekly gallery discussions and art-making classes
- Incorporates strengths of creativity, social engagement, present moment focus
- Seattle's Frye Art Museum
- fryemuseum.org/creative-aging/



Frye Art Museum. Photo: Jill Hardy

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Memory Loss Zoo Walks

- Weekly walking group plus social gathering
- Incorporates strengths of physical movement, social engagement
- Greenwood Senior Center, Alzheimer's Association, Seattle Parks & Recreation



Alzheimer's Association. Photo: Rachel Turner

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Improv Theater Workshops

- Monthly or weekly program options
- Taproot Theatre instructors at variety of venues
- Incorporates strengths of lowered inhibitions, present moment focus, social engagement
- <http://taproottheatre.org/acting-studio/early-stage-memory-loss/>



Photo: Edmonds Center for the Arts

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Food Bank Volunteer Program

- Monthly volunteer opportunity, repackaging bulk food
- Incorporates strengths of procedural memory
- Cherry Street Food Bank, Seattle Parks & Recreation



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Memory Loss Chorus

- Weekly chorus for people with memory loss and others in the community
- Incorporates strengths of musical engagement and creativity
- Greenwood Senior Center, Seattle

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LEARN MORE...

www.momentiasseattle.org

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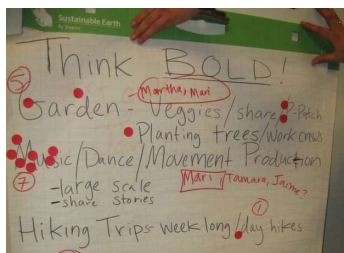
Engaging People with Memory Loss in Program Development

When exploring program ideas...

- Remember that persons with dementia are the experts
- Pay attention – brilliant program ideas may come at any moment (i.e. improv theater)
- Find opportunities for in-person feedback or guidance, i.e.:
 - Have informal conversations with folks you already know – what do people enjoy? What would they like to do in the community?
 - Brainstorm with groups that already congregate, i.e. support groups or Memory Cafés
 - Host community forums
 - Try a pop-up program with opportunity for feedback
 - Use images and tangible items to explore what people enjoy (photos of public spaces, props like musical instruments or hiking boots)
- Surveys can also work...But in person, in the moment questions based on concrete experiences work best.

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Community Forum



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Potential Partner Organizations

- Senior Centers
- Parks and Recreation
- YMCA's and other fitness centers
- Alzheimer's Association, Alzheimer's Society
- Area Agencies on Aging
- Arts & Culture Organizations
- Libraries
- Hospitals
- Long-Term Care Facilities
- Schools and Universities
- Service Organizations
- Faith Communities
- Adult Day / Adult Day Health Programs
- Health and wellness non-profits



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Strategies for Engaging Partners

- Determine what you need order to make the program happen.
- Make a list of organizations that have these assets or resources.
- Research mission and values. How do dementia-friendly programs fit in?
- Decide which to approach. Prioritize those who are close by, who you already have a working relationship with, or who have demonstrated that they value inclusion.
- Make contact with decision-maker and ask for a brief meeting.
- Prepare your spiel – dementia statistics, the “opportunity” and the ask. Make it clear what you need and how they can contribute. Use a story to make an impact.
- Assume support!
- If you get a “yes,” follow up. If you get a “no,” you can adjust your ask, or move on. If a “maybe,” find a next step that they will agree to (i.e. visiting a program, a phone call in a week, etc).

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Funding, Staffing, Outreach

- Funding:

Programs are ideally free or low-cost. Funding for individual programs comes through grants, sponsorship, program fees or donations, individual donors or a combination.

- Staffing:

Program planning is often done by a program coordinator, education coordinator, social worker, or recreation specialist in an existing organization. Some programs are planned by community members. Programs typically have a hired instructor or facilitator, with the support of at least 1 other staff or volunteer.

- Outreach:

Partner organization email lists/newsletters. Traditional media and social media. Service clubs. Faith communities. Medical contacts. Word of mouth. Outside the box (parades!).

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Making a Program “Dementia-Friendly”

- Reduce class size; increase instructor/participant ratio.
- Choose venues that are familiar, have parking, are easy to navigate, are not loud/crowded, and have accessible seating and bathrooms.
- Create a routine schedule (same place, same day/time)
- Incorporate strengths (present moment or long-term memory, procedural memory, creativity) and multiple senses.
- Adjust communication techniques (visual aids, gestures, facial expressions, 1-step instructions).
- Respect independence and choice.
- Train instructors / staff / volunteers.

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Becoming Dementia-Friendly: Where to Start in Your Community?

First Steps for Increasing Dementia Awareness:

Consider the Dementia Friends program as a simple way to improve dementia awareness in your community, www.dementiafriendswa.edu. Attend a Dementia Friends information session, bring a session to your workplace, faith community or school, or become a volunteer.

First Steps for Improving Social Connectedness:

Consider the Memory Café or Alzheimer's Café model as a simple place to start, www.memorycafedirectory.com. Visit a Memory Café in a nearby community. Ask a current Memory Café organizer for tips. Read the How-To Guide developed in Washington State, listed in the resource guide.

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“Life can get richer in some ways”

“You kind of feel free. Because you have this situation that you can't do a lot about, so you might as well do the things you really want to do – the things at the top of your list.

I've tried new things, like folk dancing and drumming. So you don't feel like your life is draining away – No, it can get richer in some ways.”



~Mary F

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Resources

Dementia Friendly America

www.DFAmerica.org

Alzheimer's Cafes

www.memorycafedirectory.com

Momentia Seattle

www.momentiaSeattle.org

I'm Still Here Foundation

www.imstillhere.org

Museum program toolkit

www.moma.org/meetme

Murray Alzheimer Research & Education Program

www.uwaterloo.ca/murray-alzheimers-research-and-education-program/about/authentic-partnership-model

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Resources

WA State Dementia Action Collaborative

- How-To Guides for Alzheimer's Cafes and Walking Groups
- www.Tinyurl.com/AlzCafeHowToGuide
- www.Tinyurl.com/DFWalkHowToGuide



The Alzheimer's Café Model

Steps to Success



Dementia-Friendly Walking Groups

A guide for community-based organizations



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Questions?

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