

Age and Dementia Friendly Communities: An Overlay

Dementia friendly communities are gaining traction as Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias pervade our aging population. They are a natural extension of age friendly communities, and a necessary one, as one in three people aged 85 or older, and one in nine aged 65 and older, in the U.S. lives with dementia. The following tables reflect the World Health Organization’s eight domains of age-friendliness alongside key characteristics of dementia friendly communities in each domain. A dementia friendly community should possess all qualities of an age friendly one as well as the unique features that address the needs of people living with dementia.

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings	
<i>Age-Friendly</i>	<i>Dementia Friendly</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The city is clean and pleasant. • There is somewhere to sit and rest, both in buildings and outdoors. • Good, accessible public toilets are available. • Pavements are wide, well-maintained, and non-slip, and pedestrian paths are clear, smooth, and separate from cycling paths. • Safe green spaces, including smaller, more contained areas, are readily available. • Public safety in all open spaces and buildings is a priority and promoted. • Roads are safe for pedestrians to cross. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The environment is familiar (functions of places and buildings are obvious) and distinctive (urban and building form is varied). • The physical environment is easy to navigate and includes a variety of landmarks to aid wayfinding. • Blocks are small and streets are short and well-connected. • Simple, explicit signs with unambiguous graphics give essential information at key decision points • Entrances to places and buildings are clearly visible and obvious. • Easy to use street furniture is available and in styles familiar to older people

Housing	
<i>Age-Friendly</i>	<i>Dementia Friendly</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient, affordable housing and essential services are available to all older people. • Housing is close to services and the rest of the community • Home modification options are affordable and available from knowledgeable providers • Affordable services enable older people to age in place at home. • Housing design facilitates continued integration of older people into the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A range of quality housing options exists for people with dementia at various stages of the disease • Community-based supports and services help people with dementia maximize independent living • Older adult residential settings offer quality memory care services and supports • Direct-care staff at care facilities receives best practices dementia training.

Social Participation	
<i>Age-Friendly</i>	<i>Dementia Friendly</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A wide-variety affordable activities is offered to older adults and their companions • Events are held at times and places that are convenient and accessible to older people • Activities are well-communicated to older people, and there is consistent outreach to include people at risk of social isolation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are organized activities that are specific and appropriate for the needs of people with dementia • A befriending service helps people with dementia to participate in community life and provides emotional support.

Transportation	
<i>Age-Friendly</i>	<i>Dementia Friendly</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public transportation is reliable, frequent, safe and affordable; serves all city areas and services; has priority seating for older adults • Specialized transportation is available for disabled people • Drivers are courteous and sensitive to older riders • Transport spots are accessible, comfortable and located near where older adults live • A voluntary transport service is available • Taxis are accessible, affordable and have helpful drivers • Priority parking and drop-off spots are readily available for people with special needs • Roads are well-maintained and well-lit. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation escorts are available to help passengers with dementia use public transport • Transit drivers are trained to be sensitive to riders with dementia and how to help them • Transport does not require passengers to handle money; companions travel for free • Transportation services for people with dementia are well-advertised and promoted as supportive. • Transportation services can be adapted to the needs of people with dementia, including schedule reminders and help at destinations. • Supportive assistance along the way helps passengers with dementia travel successfully • Caregivers have help and support addressing driving cessation for someone with dementia

Respect and Social Inclusion	
<i>Age-Friendly</i>	<i>Dementia Friendly</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older people are valued and respected by the community • Older people are included as full partners in community decision-making affecting them. • Intergenerational activities are part of the community fabric and include older adults • Public and commercial services and products include those adapted to older people's needs and preferences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community is dementia-aware and puts forth a spirit of support. • People with dementia themselves acknowledge the positive contribution they can make in their communities, and maintain and develop new relationships and social networks • Staff at businesses learn to recognize signs of dementia and how to support customers with dementia

Civic Participation and Employment

<i>Age-Friendly</i>	<i>Dementia Friendly</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older people have a range of flexible and appropriately paid opportunities. • Workplaces are adapted to meet the needs of disabled people. • A range of volunteer options is available. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employers' policies accommodate caregivers' responsibilities. • The voices of people with dementia and their caregivers are sought in community decisions. • People with dementia continue to do the activities they did prior to having dementia and to live with independence and purpose. • People with dementia have meaningful volunteer opportunities tailored to their interest and ability.

Communication and Information

<i>Age-Friendly</i>	<i>Dementia Friendly</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is reliable and regular distribution of information to seniors, and in accessible formats that they prefer, including to seniors who have hearing or vision loss • Seniors are kept connected to news, events and activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is work to break down the stigma of dementia, especially in seldom heard communities (such as some ethnic minorities). • Specific outreach to people with dementia and their caregivers keeps them connected and informed of social activities and services.

Community and Health Services

<i>Age-Friendly</i>	<i>Dementia Friendly</i>
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Age and Dementia Friendly Communities

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An adequate range of health and community support services is offered• Home care services include health, personal care and housekeeping• All staff is respectful, helpful and trained to serve older people.• Economic barriers for lower-income people are minimal• Volunteers of all ages are encouraged to support and assist older people in a wide range of settings• Community emergency planning takes into account the vulnerabilities and capacities of older people | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Early access to diagnosis and post-diagnostic support exists for patients and caregivers• Education, counseling and support for caregivers and their families allows them to continue their critical role in supporting people with dementia• Wellness programs help people with dementia and reduce severity of disease• Advance care, financial and legal services with specialized knowledge of circumstances of people with dementia available• At-home services help people with dementia adjust to changing needs• Dementia-focused programs such as Dementia Friends and community trainings can leverage the broader community in providing a support network• Community emergency planning specifies procedures for people with dementia |
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Since age is the greatest risk factor for dementia, communities working towards age-friendly resources may want to consider adding dementia friendly elements to their efforts. The list below, shows dementia friendly elements that communities may want to consider adding to their age-friendly efforts

Age Friendly	Dementia Friendly	Features
✓		The city is clean and pleasant, with enforced regulations.
	✓	The environment is familiar (the functions of buildings are obvious) and distinctive (urban and building form is varied).
	✓	The physical environment is easy to navigate and includes a variety of landmarks to aid wayfinding.
✓		A spectrum of quality housing options, including support for aging in place, is available for older people as their needs change over time.
	✓	A range of quality housing options, including memory care services and supports, exists for people with dementia at various stages of the disease.
✓		A wide-variety of affordable, convenient and accessible activities is offered to older adults and their companions.
	✓	People with dementia and their caregivers have access to organized activities designed specifically for their needs.
✓		Public transport is reliable, frequent, safe and affordable; serves all city areas; and has priority seating for older adults.
	✓	Transport does not require passengers to handle money, and supportive assistance is available along the way to help passengers with dementia travel successfully
✓		Drivers (public transport, taxis, other services) are courteous and sensitive to older riders.
	✓	Drivers are trained to recognize passengers with dementia and how to help them.
✓		Roads are well-maintained, well-lit, and well-signed, and priority parking and drop-off spots are readily available.
	✓	Transportation services for people with dementia are well-advertised and promoted as supportive.
✓		Older people are valued and respected by the community
	✓	Community is dementia-aware and puts forth a spirit of support; people with dementia, including those from seldom-heard communities, are free from stigma.
✓		Older people receive services and products adapted to their needs and preferences.
	✓	Businesses become educated about dementia, train employees how to support customers with dementia, and offer specialized services to people with dementia and their families.
✓		Reliable and regular distribution of information to seniors keeps them connected to news, events and activities.
	✓	Specific outreach to people with dementia and their caregivers keeps them engaged and helps prevent social isolation.
✓		An adequate range of health and community support services is offered.
✓		Home services staff is respectful, helpful and trained to serve older people.
	✓	Clinical providers are equipped to screen and diagnose dementia.
	✓	Education and support for caregivers allows them to continue their critical role in supporting people with dementia.

	✓	At-home services from dementia-educated staffed help people with dementia maximize independent living and adjust to changing needs.
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