

Alzheimer Society

SASKATCHEWAN

Learn More **Live Well**



Dementia Friendly Toolkit ***The Pharmacy Edition***

**Building a more Dementia Friendly
Saskatchewan...**
One community at a time.

INTRODUCTION

Today in Saskatchewan, 10 or more people develop dementia every 24 hours. While this number is projected to increase as the population ages, dementia does not just affect older adults. Dementia affects both urban and rural communities as they strive to create safe environments for their citizens. It affects businesses as staff respond to the needs of clients and customers experiencing changes in abilities, behaviour, or communication. It affects workplaces as employers and colleagues seek to support co-workers who may be experiencing warning signs themselves, or who may be taking on care partner roles.

What is Dementia?

Dementia affects more than just memory. It is not a normal part of aging.

Not every older person develops dementia, and dementia can affect people in their 60's, 50's, even 40's. Dementia is a term that describes a group of symptoms including memory loss and difficulties with comprehension, problem-solving, judgment, or language. It can be referred to as an "umbrella term" because there are many different types of dementia.

Some types of dementia are neurodegenerative conditions that progress over time. These include, but are not limited to, Alzheimer's disease, Vascular dementia, Lewy Body dementia, and Frontotemporal dementia. There is presently no known cure for these progressive, neurodegenerative conditions, however early diagnosis is important to help connect those affected to treatment, evidence-based information, and supports to help them live well with dementia.

Warning Signs

There are ten evidence-based warning signs of dementia. These warning signs can be summarized as the "ABC's of Dementia" based on changes in Abilities, Behaviour, and Communication. The warning signs a person may experience are dependent on the type of dementia they have, the area of the brain affected, and the person's own characteristics.

Building awareness and understanding of dementia is a critical step to becoming more dementia friendly. Stigma is often caused by assumptions and lack of knowledge or understanding of what a person with dementia may experience. By increasing awareness, stigma is reduced. Visit www.ABCDementia.ca to learn more about the ten warning signs.

The 10 warning signs include:

- Memory loss affecting day-to-day function
- Difficulty performing familiar tasks
- Disorientation of time and place
- Impaired judgment
- Changes in mood and behavior
- Problems with language
- Loss of initiative
- Changes in personality
- Misplacing things
- Problems with abstract thinking

DEMENTIA FRIENDLINESS

Dementia Friendly initiatives have roots in Japan and the United Kingdom but have spread across the globe in recent years. The Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan joined several other Canadian provinces in efforts to become more dementia friendly by launching the province's first Dementia Friendly Communities initiative in January 2017.

International initiatives differ in approach and implementation, but the concept of dementia friendliness focuses on building understanding and reducing stigma so that people with dementia can be included and supported to participate in their communities to the fullest extent possible.

Dementia Friendly Communities:

The Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan's Dementia Friendly Communities initiative assists groups of all types and sizes to learn about ways their social and physical environments can better support people affected by dementia, and encourages them to incorporate changes to become more inclusive and accessible.

The actions each community takes to become more dementia friendly will vary according to their own unique characteristics, settings, capacity, and priorities. Therefore, involvement in the Dementia Friendly Communities initiative does not require completion of a prescribed set of steps or milestones. Instead, involvement includes using a dementia friendly lens to identify areas of improvement in the existing physical and social environments, then committing to actions that will have an impact for people affected by dementia in those areas.

Results of a 2016 survey of care partners and people living with dementia in Saskatchewan indicated the following are perceived as essential components of dementia friendly communities:

1. The **built environment** including accessible indoor and outdoor spaces that are designed to support navigation, familiarity, and the maintenance of routines;
2. Supportive **social networks** of community members, friends, family members, and peer groups; and
3. **Awareness and understanding** in the professional sector, public service organizations, health care providers, and the general public.

Our ultimate vision is that communities working to become more dementia friendly will recognize that a person with dementia may experience the world differently and will be prepared to make a conscious effort to reduce stigma and become more supportive, inclusive, and accessible.

***Dementia friendly
communities mean people with
dementia are supported to live
well and***

What People with Dementia and Care Partners say:

“Lots of people make no differentiation of where you’re at on the continuum. They expect if you have it that you’re at the end and you should be what they picture of that end stage.”

“Approximately six years ago I began having issues at work. I would misplace files and had not left my desk. This graduated to where I could not remember how to use a credit/debit card machine or transfer from one service department program to the other... I had trained employees to use all this. It was like my memory was on delay or gone. I began checking and re-checking my work. I went from being a multitasking, efficient, quick learner and worker, to very slow and stressed.”

“The stigma of the disease causes some people to treat you like you have a communicable disease. They seem to doubt that it is possible for you to have dementia and function.”

“I felt myself withdrawing from those around me. Being in a crowd created stress as I was having trouble following conversations. Plus, anything I wanted to contribute would be lost as I waited for someone to finish speaking.”



THE ROLE OF BUSINESSES

In the Dementia Friendly Communities initiative, the term community is not limited by size or geographical borders. Professional groups, faith-based groups, social groups, organizations and businesses of all types and sizes may get involved in learning about how their services can better meet the needs of the people affected by dementia with whom they interact. Together, we can become a more dementia friendly Saskatchewan.

A Dementia Friendly Business:

- Considers that a person with dementia may experience the world differently, and incorporates this knowledge accordingly in decisions that affect policy, practice, and design;
- Makes efforts to understand the impact of dementia in their community by ensuring people affected by dementia are included and consulted in conversations about becoming more dementia friendly;
- Actively works to challenge stigma by creating a culture of understanding about dementia, addressing myths and promoting evidence-based information;
- Is responsive to the needs of people affected by dementia and addresses barriers to provide a more accessible and welcoming space.

Becoming More Dementia Friendly Helps Businesses:

- **Improve customer service** - Consideration for the needs of people living with dementia can contribute to a reputation of being socially responsible and considerate of the needs of the community.
- **Reduce stressful interactions** - Building understanding in the professional sector has an impact on interactions between customers and staff. Improved awareness can reduce stigma that prevents people with dementia from engaging in community activities.
- **Create safer and more supportive environments** - Dementia friendly considerations can help to support the person with dementia to remain in their own communities for as long as possible.
- **Incorporate universal design** - Many dementia friendly physical environments relate to aspects of universal design, resulting in potential for all community members to benefit when public spaces (like stores) are accessible and easy to navigate.

"Individuals with dementia deserve nothing less than a dementia friendly Canada in which they are not only accepted but embraced."

– Canadian Senate Report, 2016

DEMENTIA FRIENDLY PHARMACIES

It is estimated that approximately 60% of people living with dementia live in the community in their own homes. As a business in the community, pharmacies are sites of interaction for people living with dementia and those that support them who visit the pharmacy to shop, access health services, and seek health information.

People living with dementia experience changes in abilities, behavior, and communication that can make activities such as managing medications, communicating with others, navigating the aisles of a store, and completing transactions challenging.

Pharmacies are ideally positioned to promote dementia friendliness by incorporating efforts to be more supportive, inclusive, and accessible in both their social and physical environments.

Dementia Friendly Pharmacies Can:

- Connect individuals living with dementia and care partners who are seeking information to ongoing support and follow-up through **direct referral** to the Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan's **First Link program**;
- Reduce stigma by **increasing awareness about dementia among staff at all levels**;
- Dispel common myths and misconceptions by making evidence-based information accessible to staff and customers;
- Build **understanding of communication strategies**, empowering staff to understand and respond to the needs of customers affected by dementia;
- **Help advocate for an early diagnosis by talking to customers about warning signs**, discuss potential medication interactions or other treatable conditions that can contribute to symptoms, and encourage individuals that are concerned about changes to speak to their physician;
- Discuss suitable strategies for medication management when filling or renewing prescriptions for customers with dementia, and **respond to their inquiries regarding medications** that may be prescribed to slow progression;
- **Ensure the pharmacy environment is accessible**, welcoming and safe with consideration given to improving navigation and incorporating familiar design;
- **Share available resources** such as the Getting a Diagnosis Toolkit, Dementia Helpline, and the ABC's of Dementia Warning Signs campaign that provide valuable information for individuals to learn more and live well with dementia.

How Can This Toolkit Help Pharmacies?

This toolkit contains information about dementia, as well as tips and strategies to help pharmacies understand ways that important elements in their social and physical environments can become more dementia friendly.

This practical information aims to assist in identifying actions and areas of improvement for staff, practices and the physical environment, and provides tools to support efforts to incorporate more dementia friendly considerations.

1. Key Considerations for Dementia Friendly Staff:

- Information to help staff understand and respond to the needs of customers that may be experiencing changes in abilities, behaviour, or communication.
- Practical tips and strategies that can be incorporated into daily interactions and help staff provide assistance and communicate effectively during transactions.
- Reducing stigma and building understanding for employers and colleagues to support co-workers affected by dementia.

Tools enclosed:

- Communication Tips for All Customer-Facing Staff (pg. 11 & 12)

2. Key Considerations for Dementia Friendly Practices:

- Exploring evidence-based practices and sector specific examples for everyday interactions that are mindful of the needs of people living with dementia and their care partners.
- Applying a dementia friendly lens to existing systems, policies, and programs aligns efforts to become more dementia friendly with current mandates and improves the impact of these actions without straining limited resources or capacity.

Tools enclosed:

- Practical Tips for All Customer-Facing Staff (pg. 14 & 15)

3. Key Considerations for Dementia Friendly Public Spaces:

- Emphasizing the impact that different features of the physical environment have on the experiences of people living with dementia and sharing information about considerations for design that can support people with dementia to maintain routines, navigate spaces, and complete transactions more independently.
- Utilizing tools to assess the current level of dementia friendliness of the physical environment and identify areas of possible improvement.

Tools enclosed:

- Dementia Friendly Indoor Environment Checklist (pg. 19 - 21)
- Additional Tips for the Physical Environment (pg. 22)



Becoming more dementia friendly is an ongoing commitment to being supportive, inclusive and accessible for people affected by dementia.

BECOMING MORE DEMENTIA FRIENDLY

Considerations for Staff

Staff who have an awareness about dementia, recognize it's warning signs, and understand that a person with dementia may experience the world differently can provide a higher level of customer service by incorporating dementia friendly considerations into their everyday interactions. Ensuring staff at all levels are supported to learn more about dementia and ways to support someone with it can be one way to become more dementia friendly.

Promote learning:

- Work with the Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan to host an educational presentation such as the ABC's of Dementia for staff to learn about the changes in abilities, behaviour and communication that can occur.
- Share evidence-based resources about dementia during staff orientation processes to encourage learning. Contact the Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan to inquire about available resources. Consider policies to support these awareness building efforts, even if staff transition occurs.
- Familiarize staff with information about Companion cards and Independence cards so that they may better understand appropriate responses if a customer presents such a card.
- Reduce stigma by participating in Canada's Alzheimer's Awareness Month (January) and World Alzheimer Month (September) by displaying posters and print materials, sharing the ASOS' social media posts, and considering hosting a fundraiser in-store.

Start one Friend at a time:

- Encourage staff at all levels to become Dementia Friends. A Dementia Friend is someone that learns more about dementia and what they can do to be more supportive and inclusive in their everyday interactions.
- Dementia Friends receive a monthly e-Newsletter directly enabling them to build awareness and understanding in a convenient way and on an ongoing basis. The e-Newsletter includes practical tips and strategies to incorporate in their everyday interactions, helping staff to respond to customers who live with dementia.
- Consider incorporating Dementia Friends sign-up information into orientation processes when on-boarding new staff or when holding in-services with existing staff.

Build skills with communication strategies:

- Customer-facing staff who possess an understanding of communication changes will be more prepared to respond in effective ways when customers require assistance. If someone with dementia becomes lost, disoriented or stressed, communication strategies may also be useful in providing effective support while helping the person get safely home.
- Ensure every staff member is provided a copy of this toolkit and encourage them to review the "Communication Tips for Customer-Facing Staff" on the following pages.
- Post or share these tips in a place that is visible as a handy reference for staff.
- Contact the Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan to request additional Communication Strategies information.

“You might wonder how you can help someone with dementia... Keep things simple.

Just treat us as you would like to be treated by using kindness, gentleness and remaining calm. Direct us, do not dictate to us. Talk to us not about us. Ask us how we are doing and listen to understand. We are still people, we still have opinions.

Help and support us by learning about this horrible disease.”

- Ida Ryhorchuk, Co-Chair of the Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan's Leadership Group for People with Dementia



Communication Tips for All Customer-Facing Staff

What all staff should know to better support customers with dementia

A person with dementia may experience changes in communication that include difficulties with language and verbal communication, loss of vocabulary, needing more time to respond to questions, or reverting to a first language. These challenges may become greater when the person is rushed or pressured.

Providing Directions and Aiding Navigation:

- If someone seems to be experiencing difficulty navigating the store or locating items, offering to help by accompanying them to find items may be a welcomed gesture. This may also be more effective than simply pointing in the general vicinity of the item or providing verbal directions.
- Approach them in a friendly manner, introduce yourself, and offer to help. It can be startling to call to someone or shout from a distance.
- Do not take it personally if they do not recognize you, even if you have met before. Avoid putting memory loss on the spot by asking questions like "Don't you remember me?" or "Did you forget what you are looking for?". Try instead to ask: "Is there something I can help you find?".

Body Language and Listening:

- Use your body language to assure them that you are focused while they are speaking. Face them while you listen. Provide reassurance to take their time.
- Try to communicate in a noise free place where distractions are minimized. A quiet, comfortable seating space without background music or foot-traffic may serve the purpose.
- Even when speech is difficult to interpret, be aware of their body language which can convey a lot of information. Use key words to ask something like "I am finding it hard to understand, are you saying...?" If this does not prove helpful, ask if they prefer to write it down instead.
- Supplement your verbal communication with cues and body language, such as holding the object you are referring to, or pointing to the specific line on a document you are discussing.

Connecting, Not Correcting:

- People with dementia may say something that does not make sense or may be factually incorrect. Try to avoid arguing with them about reality, as "reality checks" can cause frustration, confusion, and are not an effective communication strategy.
- Seek to understand and respond to the feeling the person is trying to communicate. By connecting, rather than correcting, you can focus on the meaning of the message they are trying to convey.

At Service Desks:

- Maintain eye contact when speaking to someone.
- Enunciation is imperative but avoid making assumptions about hearing loss like speaking at a louder volume or too forcefully.
- Ask one question or provide one piece of instruction at a time. Allow them ample time to reply after each question or instruction.
- Wear a nametag which is easily visible and can help to identify you as a staff member or someone that may provide assistance for completing transactions.
- If the person experiences difficulty in finding the right word, offer suggestions by inferring from context (“Do you mean...?”) but do not make assumptions or talk over them.
- Memory loss may make it difficult for someone with dementia to remember numbers such as a PIN, password, dates, or previous transactions. In this case, quizzing them for specific details can increase frustration and anxiety. Be patient and understanding if someone experiences difficulty remembering. Try suggesting alternate strategies which may provide another option to complete the transaction.
- If someone experiences difficulties in handling money or using a card, ask the person if you can help. Offer to count out coins so that they may complete the transaction. Reassure them to take their time and do not rush.

On the Phone:

- Staff that are interacting with callers over the phone may incorporate additional considerations to enhance communication. In addition to the above suggestions, it may also be helpful to use short, simple sentences and speak at a slower pace.
- Frame questions with yes or no answers, and ask direct, rather than open-ended questions. For example: “How can I help you today?” may be a common greeting, but if the caller is having challenges with word-finding, re-framing the question to be more direct, such as “Are you calling about your prescription today?” may help prompt them to respond.
- Reiterate information frequently. Recap or review previous discussion and re-introduce yourself if you return to the call after being on hold.
- When transferring a phone call to a new department or phone line, provide an introduction to the recipient which recaps your conversation and offers details about why the individual was calling. This can help to make the transfer smoother and reduces the need for the caller to recall previous conversation or repeat questions.
- Avoid slang, jargon, and other turns of phrase that may be misinterpreted if taken literally. Simple language is easier to understand, especially when body language and visual cues are not available to supplement communication.
- If processes allow, follow-up by sending a written or emailed account of the discussion. This can help to provide a reference of what was discussed and may assist the person by providing a reminder of next steps or follow-up actions that are required. It can also be referred back to if the person calls repeatedly.

60% of people living with dementia live in their own communities.

Neurodegenerative types of dementia, such as Alzheimer's disease, progress over time.

With an early diagnosis and proper supports in place, an individual with dementia may continue to live well in their community for a long time.



BECOMING MORE DEMENTIA FRIENDLY

Considerations for Practice

Recognizing when someone may be living with dementia:

It is not possible to determine someone is living with dementia by appearance only. Some individuals may inform you about a cognitive impairment and ask for help. Others may carry a card such as a Companion card or Independence card to discreetly disclose their diagnosis.

Being dementia friendly does not mean that staff must identify customers who have dementia or ask customers difficult or intrusive questions. However, awareness may help prepare staff members to respond and offer support when a customer is experiencing any of the following:

- Appears to be a bit lost or confused in time or space,
- Appears to be having problems remembering what they are doing or what to do next,
- Experiences challenges navigating the environment,
- Shows difficulties in communicating clearly, word finding or identifying items,
- Struggles to read and comprehend written information,
- Repeatedly asks for the same information after receiving the answer.

Many of the concepts behind communication strategies and other considerations are universally beneficial. If you recognize the above, or notice other warning signs but are unsure if the person has dementia, you may still find benefit by incorporating strategies referred to in this toolkit into your interaction.

Referring to the First Link program:

Healthcare professionals - including Pharmacists - are able to refer to First Link, a program connecting people with dementia and care partners to support to learn more and live well. Through First Link, people affected by dementia receive follow-up contact from the Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan that can help them to access ongoing information, education, learning opportunities, and support. On average, direct referral helps individuals connect to information and support 11 months sooner than if they were left to self refer.

- Learn about the Resource Centre location nearest you by contacting the Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan. Introduce yourself to your local First Link Coordinator or Dementia Helpline Coordinator.
- Familiarize staff with the referral process for First Link as well as the benefits of referral.
- If you identify individuals that could benefit from the First Link program, obtain their consent to complete a direct referral form and submit it to the ASOS.
- Keep a few First Link pamphlets on hand behind the pharmacy counter or in a display rack. These are available from the Alzheimer Society and can be shared with those who may be interested in support and information.
- Ensure that the First Link referral form is available on your local intranet or electronic system, making it simple for staff to find and use.

Practical Tips for All Customer-Facing Staff

What all staff should know to better support customers with dementia

A person with dementia may experience changes in behaviour, mood or personality that can affect the person's experience in a store or interaction with others.

The following considerations are intended to offer information that can be useful in everyday interactions. Share these tips with staff to prepare for possible scenarios with customers, or discuss these tips at your next staff in-service.

Refilling prescriptions:

- Explain the medication information each time, regardless of if it is an old or new prescription.
- Offer phone reminders when prescriptions are due for refill (if the available data management system allows).
- Encourage customers with dementia to let you know if they are experiencing any new difficulties or changes, and use communication strategies to prompt them if memory loss makes this challenging. By asking yes or no questions you can provide gentle prompts and inquire about specifics they may not think of at first.
 - For example, you might ask "Do you find this medication makes your mouth feel dry?" rather than "Have you experienced any side effects in the last 3 months?".
- If there has been a change in the look of the medication – either in colour, shape, size or packaging - make sure to note this verbally and clearly identify the medication with a label when dispensing it.
- Offer options such as blister packs to organize pills and familiarize yourself with other creative solutions like diaries, apps and timers that may be suggested to help manage medication timing. Work with the person to understand the strategies that are best for them.

Communicating medication information:

- Clearly identify specific instructions and avoid vague or unfamiliar terminology. For example try: "At breakfast" rather than "once daily with food", or explain "once in the morning, once in the evening" rather than "b.i.d.".
- Ask the individual if they wish to have a care partner or additional person with them before you explain any new medications or changes in medication instructions. Alternatively, ask if they would like to write down any notes, or offer a written recap of what you have said so that they may refer to it at home.
- Showing each medicine as it is being explained and providing other visual cues such as color-coded labels and take-home written information can help reinforce verbal information for someone experiencing communication changes.

Helping someone with dementia who is lost or disoriented:

- Remain calm and reassure them you are there to help. Assure the person that they are safe and welcome them to be seated in a quiet area where foot traffic, noise and other potentially confusing distractions are limited.
- If they prefer to move or pace, give them the space to do so. Avoid crowding the individual or making them feel cornered or blocked in.
- Attempt to determine if a care partner, friend or family member may have visited with them, or if there is a care partner they would like contacted.
- Incorporating communication strategies like making eye contact and speaking calmly can help you engage in conversation and provide reassurance to the individual that you are there to assist them.
- Some people with dementia may choose to use a MASH* (Medic Alert Safely Home) bracelet identifying that they have memory loss or dementia. These bracelets will identify a number to call for assistance if the person becomes disoriented or lost. Look for the bracelet or another form of the body-worn emblem. Read the information available on the back. Call the number listed to connect to MedicAlert personnel and follow their directions.

Assisting if someone with dementia takes an item (forgets to pay):

- Remain calm and reassure them you are there to help. Avoid assumptions, as they may not have intended to take the item. It is possible they may not remember the process of paying for the item or could have forgotten it was in their cart.
- Provide a gentle reminder such as asking "May I help you to complete your transaction today?". Offer to assist them at the till and provide prompts throughout the process like asking if they have their cash or card.
- Beeping alarms from theft prevention units may be startling for someone with dementia, and the unexpected noise or presence of security personnel may cause fear or panic. Finding a quiet, discreet place to sort out the transaction may help to calm the person, reduce feelings of being overwhelmed, and preserve dignity.
- If the person experiences difficulties with coins, remembering a PIN, or has forgotten their payment card, ask if you can assist them. Offer to help count out change or consider using other forms of identification to create a "tab" if possible.

Discussing treatment options and medications for dementia:

- Consult the ***Tips on talking with patients with dementia and their caregivers about medications for Alzheimer's Disease and other dementias*** pocket guide available from the Alzheimer Society.
- Learn about the other print resources the ASOS has available related to Treatment Options and Medications; review these occasionally to stay up-to-date with the information that is available for individuals living with dementia and their care partners.
- Emphasize that the medications available currently are designed to slow progression, are not a cure, and may not be right for everyone.

Knowledge Changes Everything



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Whether incorporating small changes now or identifying considerations for future renovations, creating welcoming and accessible spaces starts with assessing the physical environment through a dementia friendly lens.

BECOMING MORE DEMENTIA FRIENDLY

Considerations for Public Spaces

Physical environments (both indoor and outdoor) have an impact on the experiences of people with dementia. Changes in abilities, behaviour and communication can affect the way individuals perceive and navigate the environment around them.

Why the Physical Environment is Important:

Simple changes in the physical environment of the pharmacy can improve the level of dementia friendliness by contributing to an accessible space in which people with dementia are supported to navigate more independently. Customers of all ages may benefit from some of these considerations that improve the universal accessibility of the space.

- Challenges in abstract thinking and comprehension can make ambiguous designs challenging, as abstract or stylized objects, signs and spaces are not easily recognizable.
- Challenges with sequential thinking may cause difficulties interpreting cues that signal the use of buildings, spaces or objects. Changes in judgment may also make the function of objects difficult to determine.
- Challenges with memory may make retracing a path and way-finding difficult, increasing the reliance on signage to provide navigational cues.
- Changes affecting a person's vision or comprehension of visual information can affect the perception of depth, patterns and surfaces, which may increase the likelihood of falls.

Dementia Friendly Environment Checklists:

Detailed information about considerations and tips for more dementia friendly physical environments and design is available in the Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan's

Dementia Friendly Indoor and Outdoor Environment Checklists.

- A copy of the Indoor Environment Checklist is available in the next pages. You may request a copy of the Dementia Friendly Outdoor Environment Checklist from the Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan by contacting friends@alzheimer.sk.ca or calling 1800-263-3367.
- Use the Checklist(s) to assess the existing features in the pharmacy space. Involve multiple staff to complete a walk-through assessment of all aspects of the store including both retail spaces, tills/checkout areas, and pharmacy/dispensary counters.
- Compare the results and priority areas identified for improvement, then discuss what would need to be done to shift scores from "Needs Improvement" to "Satisfactory" in these areas.
- Consider inviting feedback from customers affected by dementia about proposed improvements to ensure changes will be as impactful in reality as they are intended to be in theory. Their lived experience may provide valuable insight into the most important areas for improvement and can help to ensure any actions you plan to take will truly be useful.
- Once completed, consider the areas which could be improved. Identify next steps by outlining simple, tangible changes that can be made either immediately, in the next year, or planned for in future renovations.

Dementia Friendly Indoor Environment Checklist

Characteristics	Check
Entrances and Exits	
<p>All entrances and exits are clearly marked. Signs are placed directly on the door and indicate pathways both into, and out of, the business and/or building.</p> <p><i>Tip: Consider double doors - are signs placed on <u>both sides</u> and <u>both sets</u> of doors? When unsigned, empty space between doors can be disorienting.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<p>All entrances and exits are well lit, providing a safe and welcoming atmosphere.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<p>Glass doors have easily recognizable handles and a distinguishable frame to indicate the borders.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<p>Unavoidable level changes have a slope with a maximum gradient of 1 in 20. Ramps or elevators are available in addition to stairs.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<p>Steps and other level changes have visible edges marked with red, orange, or yellow tape.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<p>Seating areas are available near entrances and exits. Seating locations provide clear sightlines to parking lots, pickup zones, or public transportation access areas.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<p>A building directory is located within each elevator and/or stairwell.</p> <p><i>Tip: Often buildings offer a single directory near the entrance and/or exit. This can be challenging for visitors experiencing short-term memory loss. Adding a directory within the elevator or stairwell can provide additional points of reference and direction.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<p>Stairwells include signage at each entrance and exit door to clearly identify levels.</p> <p><i>Tip: Assess whether each floor number is visible from the elevator - does someone within the elevator have a clear sightline to the floor number?</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<p>Gates and/or doors have no more than two kilograms of pressure to open.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
<p>Lever handles are preferred over knobs to improve accessibility.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement <input type="checkbox"/> N/A

Quiet Areas and Customer Service Desks	
Quiet areas or designated spaces provide a private space to discuss personal information, and are available to offer a comfortable, less distracting atmosphere.	<input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Radio or background music is not too loud. A maximum volume is determined which does not interfere with communication. <i>Tip: Avoid playing music in meeting spaces and consultation rooms to reduce distractions and allow for better communication.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Signage and Navigation	
All key navigational decision-making areas are adequately marked with signage placed at eye-level. Obvious cues are positioned where sightlines end to make directional decisions simple and clear. <i>Tip: Consider areas leading both to and from toilets, customer service desks, seating areas, and check-out counters. Assess junctions, turns, hallways, and dead ends.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Signage, particularly when leading through a hallway or towards a department, incorporates consistent colour coding to create a distinguishable path.	<input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Signage includes a combination of text and visual images. Visual images are unambiguous and complement the text on the sign. <i>Tip: Choose images that represent the use of the space to help complement text and make signs simple to interpret.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Signage is designed to avoid highly stylized text and symbols. Text is bold and based on clean lines in a font size that is clearly legible. <i>Tip: Choose simple fonts such as Arial or Calibri and capitalize the first letter of each word. Avoid shadow or mirror effects and cursive lettering.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Signage is designed to have a matte surface with contrast between background and font. This also applies to name tags and door plates. <i>Tip: Selecting plain background colours that contrast with the door, uniform, or surface they are being placed on can help improve visibility.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Landmarks or recognizable features (such as paintings, displays or pieces of art) are permanent and provide navigational aids which help preserve a familiar routine. <i>Tip: Avoid changing the placement or location of identifiable items or using rotating displays - especially near entrances. If rotating or seasonal displays are used, ensure recognizable landmarks are not blocked or hidden.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement <input type="checkbox"/> N/A

Surfaces	
Highly reflective surfaces such as polished tile, mirrors, or metallic wallpaper are avoided or removed. Highly reflective surfaces can make objects difficult to recognize, and reflections may be distressing.	<input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Tripping hazards such as rugs or mats are minimized. If mats are required, ensure a consistent, unbroken line and minimize changes in patterns along a path.	<input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Flooring is plain and non-reflective. Dark flooring or mats may be perceived as a change in level or depth; blue patterns may look like water.	<input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Bathroom Facilities	
There are accessible washroom stalls, family washroom facilities, or individual washrooms where a care partner may provide assistance when needed.	<input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Double doors are clearly marked on both sides of each door to identify entrance and exit, as well as “push” and/or “pull”.	<input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Labels indicate hot and cold tap handles. Toilet seats and hand rails are of contrasting color to the walls and rest of the washroom to make them more visible.	<input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Lighting	
Adequate light is available to reduce dark shadows and improve visibility. Light fixtures, window coverings and lamps are oriented to avoid bright glare or shadows.	<input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Upon entering a room, easily visible light and power switches are distinguishable or automatic sensors are incorporated. Switch plate covers of contrasting colour can improve visibility.	<input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Seating	
Plenty of seating is available in large premises, particularly in waiting areas and within sightlines of the parking lot.	<input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Seating is easily identifiable and of simple, recognizable design. <i>Tip: Choose stationary chairs (without casters) and benches with arms. Avoid seating that does not look like seating and benches without arms or back rests.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory <input type="checkbox"/> Needs Improvement <input type="checkbox"/> N/A

Additional Tips for the Physical Environment

Simple changes for now and other ideas for the future

Surfaces and Flooring:

- Reduce clutter around cashier counters, entryways, and poster boards.
- Glass doors or room dividers should be adequately marked to improve visibility.
- Avoid highly reflective finishes - like polished tile, mirrors, or metallic wallpaper - that can make objects and surfaces difficult to recognize for someone with dementia, or others experiencing vision related changes.
- Avoid black floor mats, or patterned flooring that may be mistaken for an uneven surface, water or a hole. If someone seems to be hesitant or anxious to cross a mat or patterned floor, offer reassurance and assist them to navigate around it or step over it with them.

Quiet Areas:

- Excessive noise and loud music can be distressing to a person with dementia, making it difficult to communicate or creating an overwhelming amount of stimuli.
- A quiet space can provide an area to rest and help comfort someone that may be overwhelmed, and may also offer a safe place for a person with dementia to wait for their care partner, if needed.

Landmarks:

- Landmarks are one navigational aid that can assist people with dementia to identify paths and directions and can play an important role in maintaining a familiar landscape through which the person is able to navigate to complete their tasks.
- Avoid changing the placement or location of common items in the store to help preserve routines and familiarity.
- Ensure seasonal displays are located in areas that don't interfere with a store's main routes, entries or exits.

Signage:

- Placement at key navigational decision-making areas is important, such as places indicating exit and entry paths, prescription pickup and ordering counters, tills and checkout counters, or retail departments.
- Place signs in the natural line of sight whenever possible and attached to the surface they refer to. Dementia may cause a person's natural sightline to lower, making overhead signs difficult to spot.
- If signage hangs from the roof (such as aisle or department markers), place additional navigational aids at the ends of aisles, on shelving or walls, or along walkways.
- Images should be unambiguous, providing information for those that experience difficulties reading written words or with word comprehension.

WHAT NEXT?

Becoming more dementia friendly is an ongoing commitment.

It does not necessarily have a defined end-point, as actions should be part of continuous efforts to improve accessibility, inclusion and support. However, reviewing this Toolkit, contacting the Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan and starting conversations about becoming more dementia friendly in your communities are great first steps to launch involvement in the initiative.

While the Alzheimer Society does not provide recognition or formal certification of a dementia friendly status, we do wish to connect with groups that want to be involved in the initiative to support and celebrate their efforts.

Some next steps can include:

- Visit **www.DementiaFriendlySaskatchewan.ca** to learn more about the Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan's Dementia Friendly Communities initiative. On that site you may review and download other available resources and sign up to become a Dementia Friend to continue to learn more about dementia.
- Email **friends@alzheimer.sk.ca** to request more information, an Action Plan Worksheet, and/or hard copies of DFC resources and other print materials.
- Form a Dementia Friendly Working Group or committee and begin conversations around identifying a vision of how your community may become more dementia friendly.
- Begin considering priorities that are important to your community and actions that may help you address these priorities ; fill these into your Action Plan Worksheet. A common action to undertake early on is to host an Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan presentation as a learning opportunity for your community.
- Connect with the Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan to review your Action Plan and access additional information to get started incorporating the changes.

Community Changes Everything



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Learn More Live Well

Learn more about dementia and what dementia friendly means for you and your community by contacting:

Jackie Hofstrand

**Dementia Community Coordinator
Alzheimer Society of Saskatchewan**

Phone (306) 783-6606

jhofstrand@alzheimer.sk.ca www.alzheimer.ca/sk/en

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