

Welcome and Appreciation!



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Dementia Friendly Massachusetts



Dementia Friendly Massachusetts (DFM)

*Dementia Friendly Massachusetts is a **state-wide, grassroots movement** comprised of organizations, individuals, and municipalities growing dementia friendly communities **to become more inclusive** and supportive of those living with dementia, their families, and care partners. Dementia Friendly Massachusetts is a member of Dementia Friendly America and is generously supported by Tufts Health Plan Foundation.*



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DFM – Sharing a Dementia Language

“Words are very powerful – they can build you up or put you down. When you are speaking about dementia remember this.”

- Agnes Houston, person with dementia

- **Language changes needed:**
 - Not “suffering” from dementia but living with challenges
 - Not “patients” when living in the community
 - Not “demented” but living with dementia





Dementia is...

- Dementia is – NOT a specific disease
- Dementia is - a general term for a decline in mental ability severe enough to interfere with daily life
- Memory loss is an example
- Alzheimer's is the most common type of dementia
- Some conditions creating dementia are reversible - thyroid problems and vitamin deficiencies



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Reframing Dementia: Inclusion and Accessibility

World Health Organization's Action Plan – April 2017

Dementia Action Alliance – First Annual Conference June 2017

- Dementia as living with a disability – supported by cognitive ramps
- Dementia as a public health issue
- Culture change – disabilities rights movement
 - “nothing about me without me”
 - Inclusion, accessibility, being seen as a resource
 - People living with dementia, like all of us, need and deserve to live with purpose and choice
 - Ex. Mentoring and advocacy – Dementia Action Alliance



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- ▶ **Current: 130,000 individuals living w Alzheimer's**
- ▶ **2025 = a 25% increase**



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Source: Alzheimer's Association and <https://www.dementiaaction.org.uk/nationaldementiadeclaration>

Prevalence: Whole-Community Impact



- ▶ **1 in 8 people age 65 and older has Alzheimer's Disease**
 - ▶ - Not including other causes of dementia



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Disparities – Implications for DFM Efforts



- Older African Americans and Hispanics are more likely to live with Alzheimer's and other dementias
- African- Americans: twice as likely than older whites
- Hispanics – 1.5 times as likely than older whites
- NOTE: genetic factors don't seem to account for this difference in prevalence.
- Health, lifestyle, and socioeconomic risk factors matter
- Implications – Increased outreach and inclusion to support diverse communities needed



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Defining Dementia-Friendly

Dementia-friendly communities

- Help people with dementia feel included and supported in the places they work, live and play.
- Focus on stigma reduction and the inclusion of people with dementia.
- Ensure that people living with dementia feel supported by their community members whether they are at post offices, retail outlets, using transportation or enjoying hobbies out in the community.
- “Community” can mean a location like a neighborhood or city, but can also include groups of people with shared interests or features, such as professional groups, religious organizations or businesses....even your book club, a faith group or your business, a local coffee shop or grocery store.

Source: <http://www.alzheimer.ca/en/bc/About-dementia/Dementia-friendly%20communities/What%20is%20a%20dementia-friendly%20community>



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Dementia
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America

dfamerica.org

Twitter
[@dfamerica](https://twitter.com/dfamerica)

Dementia Friendly – A Cross Sector Approach



Simplified “Better Together” Strategy



Age-Friendly Community efforts should...

- *Include people living with Dementia, caregivers, and service/support providers on task force*
- *Include a Dementia Friendly advisory group that can focus on raising awareness and working through sectors/domains in coordination with Age-Friendly*



Environmental Considerations

2 Parts to Access and Inclusion

- ▶ **Physical – environmental design**
- ▶ **Cultural – education and awareness programming**



Environmental Design: Is your Housing Community Dementia Friendly?

- **Goal: To design familiar features and spaces that prompt decision making, reduce agitation, encourage meaningful activity and social interaction, reduce risks, and maintain abilities.**



Environmental Design Considerations

- **Signage:** Use essential signs and symbols for orientation and wayfinding.
- **Flooring and other design features:** choose contrasting color schemes
- **Use materials and surfaces that support independence and cannot be mistaken as barriers.**
- **Create Pathways:**
 - provide interesting, safe indoor and outdoor pathways with smooth surfaces for walking and to encourage mobility.



Environmental Design Considerations

Use technology to promote independence :

- e.g., motion sensors that trigger lights to reduce falls, electronic tracking devices, communication devices, alarms triggered by water level in bath or sink in private homes, talking labels/touch screens.

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For More Information

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