

Dementia Friendly City Initiative Halifax

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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What is Dementia?

Dementia is not a specific disease. It's an overall term that describes a wide range of symptoms associated with a decline in memory or other thinking skills severe enough to reduce a person's ability to perform everyday activities. It includes:

- . Memory**
- . Communication and language**
- . Ability to focus and pay attention**
- . Reasoning and judgment**
- . Visual perception**

People with dementia may have problems with short-term memory, keeping track of a purse or wallet, paying bills, planning and preparing meals, remembering appointments or traveling out of the neighborhood.

DEMENTIA NUMBERS

In Nova Scotia in 2008 there were 15,186 people living with dementia- 1.6% of the population, it is predicted to increase to 28,771-2.5% of the population by 2038

Economics-cost in 2008 was \$465 million; by 2038 it will be \$24.5 billion

In Nova Scotia there are over 3000 new cases every year

DEFINING THE CONCEPT

- A city in which it is possible for the greatest number of people with dementia to live a good life
- Where people with dementia are enabled to live as independently as possible and to continue to be part of their community
- Where they are met with understanding and given support where necessary
- It is a place where the society or community acts consciously to ensure that people with dementia

are respected, empowered, engaged and embraced into the whole. To be dementia friendly, a community addresses the needs and aspirations of people with dementia across several domains

There are two distinct areas of focus

The Social Environment includes participation, inclusion, stigma, employment and community services

The Physical Environment includes public spaces, housing and transportation

The most important thing is to ask people living with dementia what their areas of concern are.

This has happened in other countries and here are some of the responses

What do people with dementia (PWD) say is important?

- The physical environment
- Local facilities
- Support services

- Social networks
- Local groups

Why do pwd stop doing things in their community?

- Their dementia has progressed and they are worried about their ability to cope
- They are concerned that people don't understand or know about dementia

How do people with dementia keep in touch with their communities?

- Through local groups
- Through the use of local facilities
- Through walking
- Through the use of support services

PWD would like to be able to

- Pursue hobbies and interests
- Simply go out more

- Make more use of local facilities
- Help others in their community by volunteering

People told us that one to one informal support was the key to helping them do these things

Becoming a Dementia Friendly Community

- Increase awareness of dementia
- Consider the needs of people with dementia when any initiative is planned
- Supporting local groups for people with dementia and their carers
- Providing more information, and more accessible information about local services and facilities
- Thinking about how local mainstream services and facilities can be made more accessible for people with dementia
- Education programs for all public contact staff
- Encourage others within HRM to be part of the initiative-be the leaders in Canada

Where does Halifax start to do this?

- Communities need knowledgeable input not least from people with dementia
- There needs to be continued media attention and public awareness campaigns
- Dementia needs to be normalised
- Encourage agencies to build on their current infrastructure to make it more accessible to people with dementia
- Make better use of existing resources?
- Organisations should work together more effectively

The biggest risk factor for dementia is age. Halifax is already part of the age friendly city initiative so we can build upon this to become dementia friendly

AGE FRIENDLY CITY CHECKLIST

- Outdoor spaces and buildings
- Transport
- Housing
- Social participation

- Respect and social inclusion
- Civic participation and enjoyment
- Information
- Health and social care services

SOME IDEAS

- Make signage simpler
- Directions clearer-uncluttered
- Improve lighting
- Using colour contrast
- Access to banks, shops, transport and leisure facilities
- Accessing housing
- Social and health care services
- Being members of groups gives people with dementia the means and confidence to be part of the wider community- work with groups to educate about dementia- to be open and accepting

- Social isolation and exclusion from mainstream activities disadvantage people with dementia
- Community support is critical from the point of diagnosis onwards

THE ECONOMIC CASE

The business case for a dementia friendly city starts with the knowledge that the proportion of people with dementia will rise sharply over the next twenty years at a time when public resources are and will continue to be under pressure. Most of us, including those with dementia, will need to lead healthier and more active lives, drawing support from the wider community for as long as we can and delaying the need for support from intensive health and social care services

Given the stringency of public funding for statutory authorities, finding new money to invest in developing dementia friendly communities is extremely unlikely but there are things that can be done within existing resources and processes

What can HRM Do?

Ensure people with dementia are consulted and involved in discussions about planned new developments or the redesign of existing public buildings, leisure complexes, hospitals or shopping centres. Incorporating dementia –friendly design features such as signs, colour schemes, and floorings-from the outset should not add to the overall costs

Take a lead in developing employment policies that include the needs of people with dementia and their carers; people frequently report that dementia does not get the same sympathetic response as cancer, for example when requesting more flexible working hours or adjustments to working practices

Learn from others what works. Much of what works for an age friendly community will work for people with dementia. Look at places like Bruges-they train public contact staff and put a ribbon symbol in the store window to signify a dementia friendly environment

Lead the way in Canada –be the first dementia friendly city- start with HRM staff and introduce training for all public contact staff

HRM can influence private sector services which are just as important to people with dementia.

Encourage them to become dementia friendly

Improve the quality of signage by making style guides available or producing guidelines to help businesses

Adopt a strategic partnership approach-there are many people touched by dementia looking for ways to help-many companies make large donations to dementia charities

There is no doubt that people with dementia and their families choose to shop and do business in places that make them feel comfortable. Dementia may be seen as a medical/ health service issue but in fact after diagnosis is a predominantly social issue.

IDEAS FROM OTHER PLACES

Australia- Train public contact staff-retail staff, police officers, receptionists, waiters, bus drivers

Liverpool UK –A postcard and poster are being developed with the message “we’re dementia aware are you.’ They include 5 top tips for making shopping easier for people with dementia

2013 declared year of dementia by Liverpool as part of their decade of health and well being

Alzheimer’s Australia NSW Dementia and age friendly outdoor design checklist

South Australia-Side by Side Program: The individual living with dementia is supported by a workplace buddy – a volunteer from the store who has received dementia training-designed for younger onset dementia or seniors who wish to return to the workplace

Kentville NS Alzheimer Café- an opportunity for people with dementia and their families to come together in the company of people in a similar situation

Victoria Australia Count Us In- A playgroup held in an aged care facility once a week for ninety minutes. Indoor and outdoor outings are arranged

UK/ Japan Dementia Friends Scheme- Aim to train one million people by 2015 to become dementia champions

England The Pioneer Group- Twenty one schools have formed a group to develop dementia awareness sessions for children and young people across England

Bruges Together for a dementia friendly Bruges -Five year action plan includes a dementia expertise centre, an accessible walk in house, symbol of a knotted handkerchief displayed in windows of local businesses to indicate a dementia friendly environment

Ireland Home from Home-Replaces traditional day care. People in the community offer hospitality in their homes to a small group of people with dementia

U.S. Dementia Friendly Hospitals-Improving care for people with dementia while in hospital

Scotland National Dementia Working Group-A group run by people with dementia who provide

expertise to policy makers and were instrumental in developing the national dementia strategy