



Why should you care?

There are currently 55,000 people living with dementia in Ireland. The majority of people with dementia (63%) live in the community. Parishes play an important role in local communities, and can promote the inclusion of people with dementia. It is essential that people living with dementia remain connected with their family, friends and local communities to reduce social isolation and loneliness. A person's faith will often be an essential part of this. Do not underestimate the difference you can make if you have a basic understanding of dementia. People with dementia have told us that it is the attitude of those they meet in the community which makes the biggest difference to their experience.

How do you know if a person needs help?

Everyday challenges differ for people with dementia some of the common difficulties they may experience in social settings include:



Remembering names or specific details



Finding words can be difficult which makes it harder for the person to tell you what they need or want



Following and contributing to religious services may become difficult



There are simple things you can do to help:



Body language

Smile warmly, make eye contact and encourage people to stay involved. Check if there is anything you can do to help the person get involved or stay involved.



Know the signs and symptoms of dementia

Understanding the signs and symptoms of dementia may enable you to recognise changes in a person. If you do notice changes ensure that they and their family know you are available to lend them your support.



Take time

It is important to focus on the person with dementia and listen attentively to what they are saying. By giving someone extra time it can enable a person to stay involved.



Provide information

If you know that someone is experiencing difficulties, link them in with relevant local Alzheimer Society of Ireland services. If you have an information area, provide leaflets about dementia this may enable people to get some practical tips about dementia.



Be positive

It is easy to think of what people with dementia cannot do, rather than what they can do. Encourage people to stay involved, the person may lose confidence so reassurances are encouraging and empowering.



Get involved

Work with your local Alzheimer Society of Ireland service to explore the possibility of hosting a dementia friendly social event or activity. Explore the possibility of parish staff and volunteers receiving dementia awareness training.



DEMENTIA FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

To find out more about Dementia Friendly Communities in Ireland please see www.alzheimer.ie or call **1800 341 341**



**THE ALZHEIMER
SOCIETY of IRELAND**



Alzheimer National Helpline: **1800 341 341**



www.alzheimer.ie



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