



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. For emergency service providers effective communication skills are vital and this is especially true when supporting people with dementia. Being able to recognise when somebody may have dementia is important, whether it is as a preventative measure or during a period of acute need. 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 providing services which makes the biggest difference to their experience.

How do you know if a person needs help?

People with dementia can be physically well and living independently in the community. Identifying a person who has dementia can be difficult. People can experience a range of difficulties that you should look out for:



Remembering names or details like their address or names and addresses of loved ones



Communicating what they need or want can be difficult



Navigating new or unfamiliar environments even in their own neighbourhood



Getting agitated in a highly charged situation



There are simple things you can do to help:



Body language

Smile warmly and make eye contact with the person. Approach the person in a friendly open manner and ask if you can help. Be conscious that the uniform may be intimidating for some people.



Listen carefully

People with dementia may develop difficulties with their speech and these can be made worse if they feel stressed or hurried. Take time to listen carefully to what the person is saying to you, give plenty of reassurance that you understand what it is they want or need.



Speak clearly

Use short simple sentences allowing the person time to understand and respond. Try saying things in a different way if the person does not understand. Do not just keep repeating yourself.



Emergency situations

If a person is lost, injured or confused, check to see if they have an identity card or other item which can tell you they have dementia and who you should contact.



The environment

A noisy and stressful environment can make the person even more distressed and confused. Where possible reduce unnecessary noise or interruptions e.g. turn off flashing lights or sirens.



Get informed

Work with your local Alzheimer Society of Ireland service to explore the possibility of getting dementia awareness training for staff.



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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