

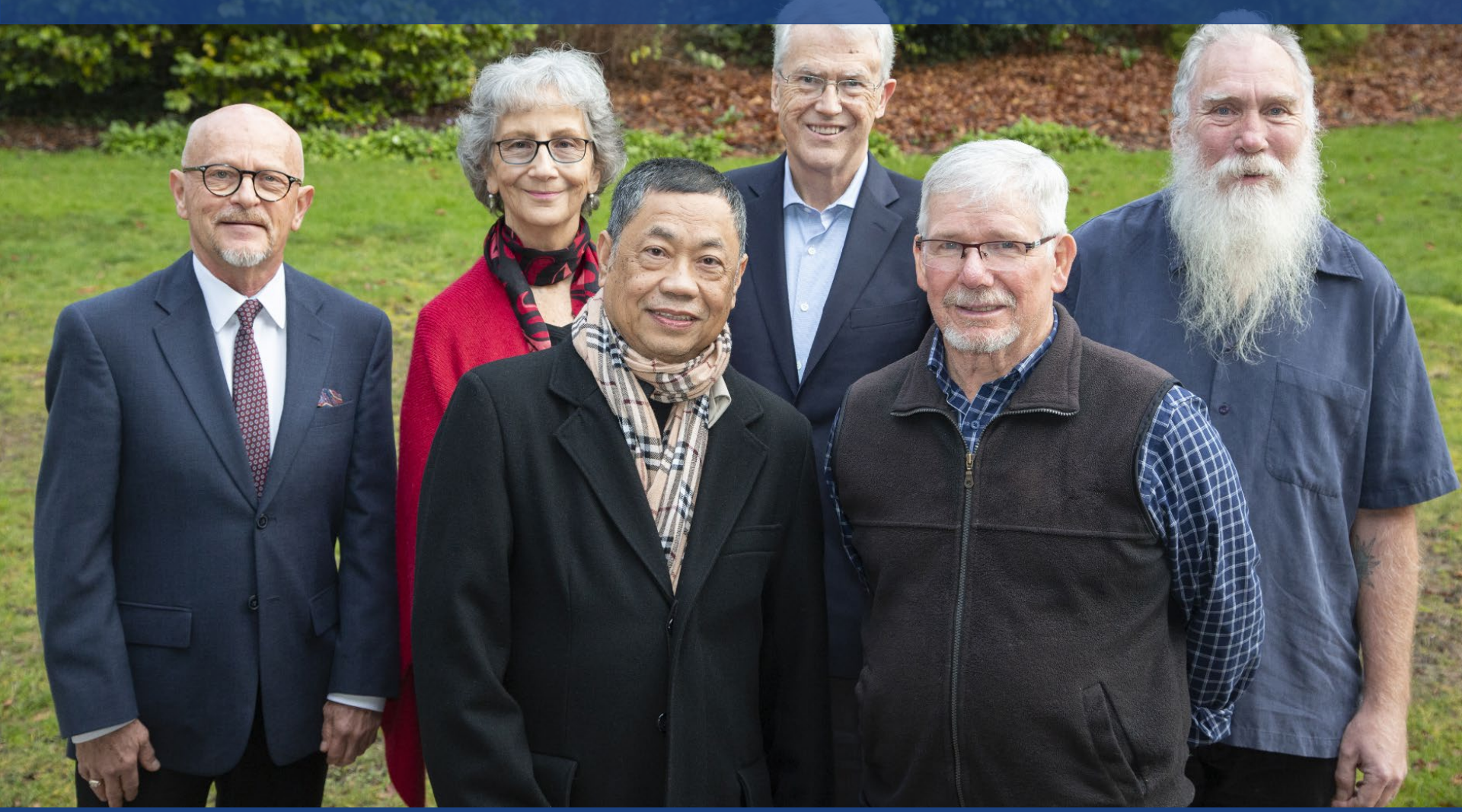


Dementia-Friendly Canada

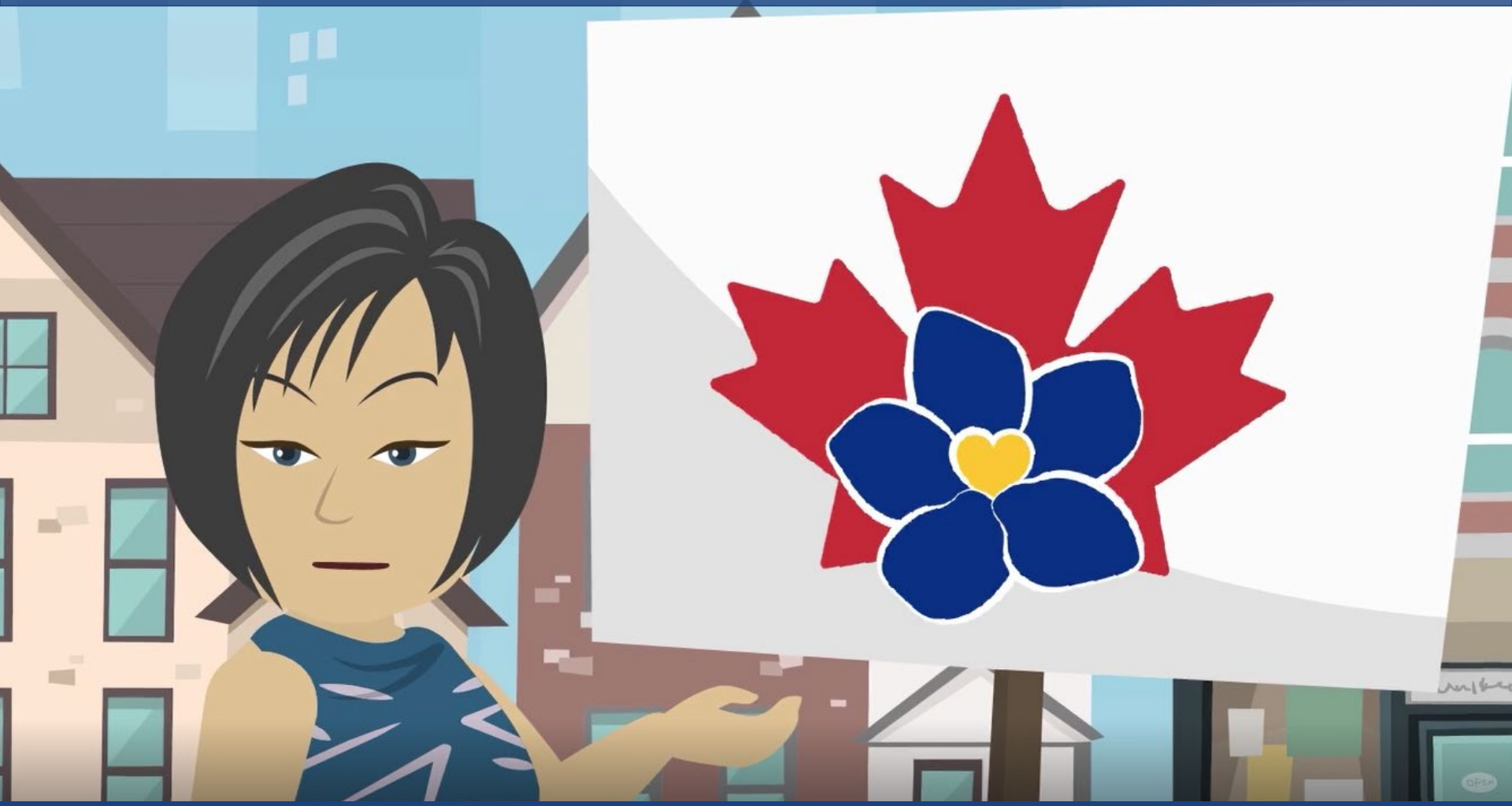
A dialogue about ensuring a
dementia-friendly experience in
recreation and libraries

November 24, 2022

Imagining a Dementia-Friendly Canada



What is a dementia-friendly community?



Building dementia-friendly communities



Building dementia-friendly communities



Building dementia-friendly communities

DO YOU WORK IN...



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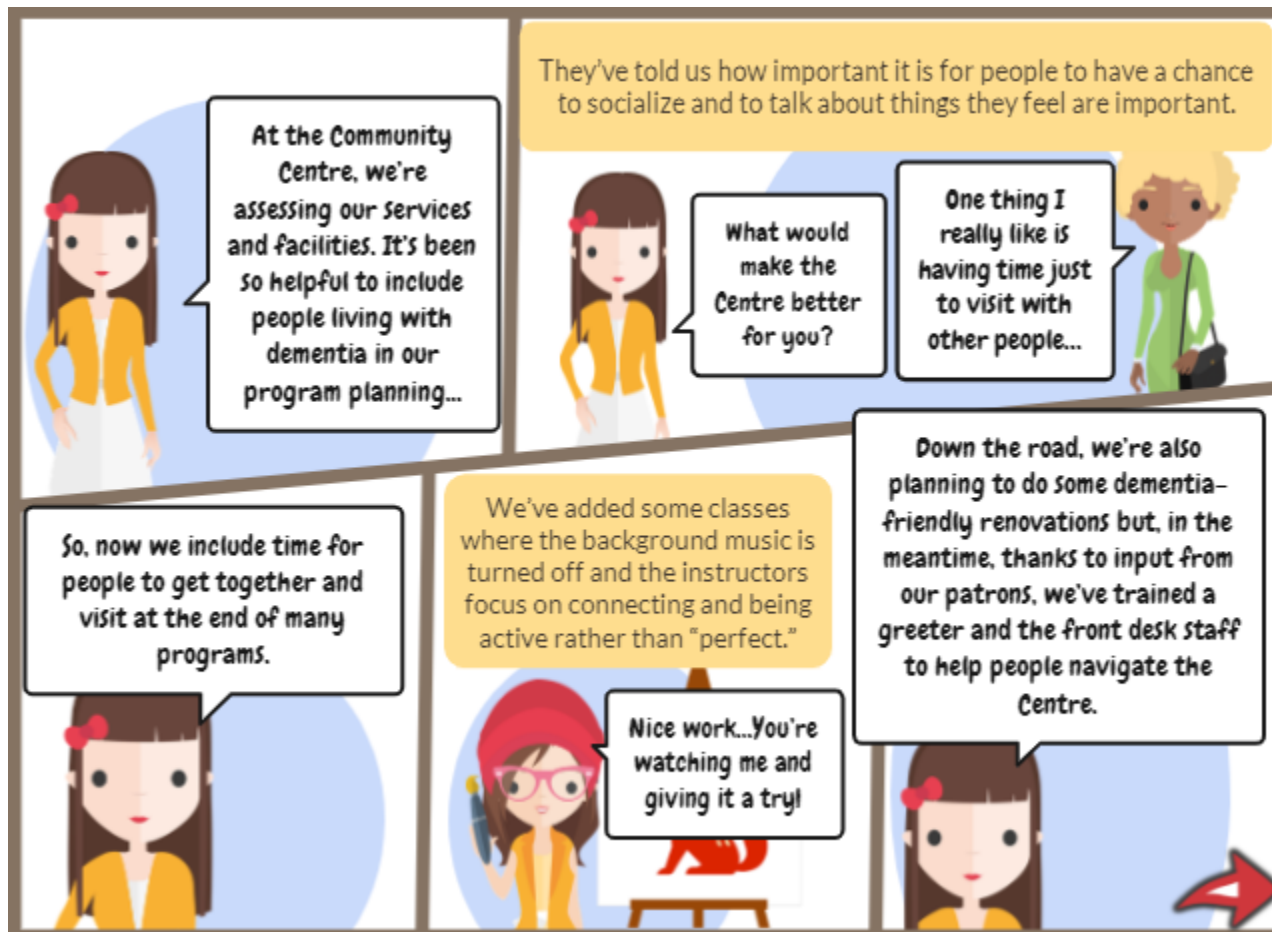


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PUBLIC TRANSIT

Building dementia-friendly communities



Resources

How to be a Dementia Friend

Dementia-friendly communities are places where people living with dementia, their families and care partners feel included and supported.

Creating these communities takes an effort from everyone – individuals and organizations alike – to learn about and promote dementia-friendly principles in the physical and social environments of our workplaces, neighbourhoods and beyond.

Promoting dementia-friendly principles means...

- Educating yourself and others about dementia and the needs of people living with dementia and their care partners.
- Making a conscious effort to reduce stigma by addressing myths, misconceptions and assumptions about dementia.
- Ensuring the rights of people living with dementia and their care partners are respected.
- Supporting people living with dementia so they can live as independently as possible and stay engaged in all aspects of community life.
- Listening to and sharing stories of people living with dementia and their care partners.
- Advocating for change in the community.

Initiating, promoting and sustaining community efforts to become dementia-friendly.

Promoting dementia awareness, education and dementia-friendly communication helps inspire community members to act with understanding and empathy, and to build safe and accessible environments that make the community dementia friendly.

Dementia-Friendly Language Guidelines

In a dementia-friendly community, people use language that is respectful and inclusive of people who live with dementia and their care partners. By using dementia-friendly language, you can help reduce the stigma.

When speaking about people living with dementia and their experiences...

...remember that people living with dementia are people foremost. It is important to use language that focuses on the person's abilities because the person is much more than their diagnosis. Language that focuses on losses and makes assumptions about ability reinforces myths and stigma and can create barriers to inclusion.

Dementia-friendly language:	Language to avoid:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Person living with dementia Challenging, life changing, stressful Changes in behaviour (speak to how behaviour has changed) Reactive behaviour Responsive behaviour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sufferer, demented person, victim, patient Devastating, hopeless, tragic (A person is) being difficult Aggressive Referring to behaviour resulting from frustrations as "reactive" or "responsive" rather than "aggressive" shows that you understand the reality of the person living with dementia
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respectful terms that acknowledge the person is an adult (e.g., "clothing protector" or "smock") 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Terms that are typically associated with children and inadvertently infantilize people living with dementia (e.g., "bibi") "Elder speak" / patronizing language such as "sweetie" or "dear"

Tips for Dementia-Friendly Interactions

Offer Appropriate Help

- Consider wearing a nametag to help identify you as staff/someone who can help
- Approach from the front in a friendly and open manner
- Remove your hat and/or sunglasses so your facial expressions are more visible
- Get the person's attention and introduce yourself – move in their line of sight, then speak (then touch gently if appropriate)
- Avoid making assumptions about what the person needs or is thinking
- Ask if and how you can help
- Provide clear instructions and answer any questions, even if you've already given that information
- If giving directions, provide visual cues/landmarks. If possible, write them down
- Offer to help them find their way and go with them, or offer to call someone
- If the person is with a care partner, remember to include the person living with dementia in making decisions that affect them

Incorporating these tips into everyday interactions will help staff at all levels of your organization contribute to a more supportive, inclusive and dementia-friendly community.

If a person living with dementia...

- ...has difficulty handling money or using their PIN
- ...has trouble remembering a PIN, password, dates, or previous transactions
- ...has difficulty filling out forms
- ...takes an item without paying

Help them you count out the money for your coffee

I get so embarrassed when I forget these

Land you sign the form right here

Hi, that's a nice hat you picked. Can I take you to the cash register to pay for it now?

Ask if it can help count out coins or suggest another option for completing the transaction. Be patient and allow the person to take their time.

Be patient and take them to a quiet place, if possible. Being quiet for details or hearing rushed can increase frustration and anxiety.

Offer verbal questions aloud and repeat as needed. Point to the places where answers or signatures are needed. Use clear language and allow time for a response.

They may have just forgotten. Remain calm and email them with dignity. Offer to help them complete the transaction in a friendly manner.

Tips for Dementia-Friendly Written Material

Written communication can be confusing for people living with dementia. Here are some tips to help make your organization's written materials more dementia friendly.

Writing style

- Present information one idea at a time and stick to the main message
- Keep language simple, but not patronising
- Avoid jargon and abbreviations and explain all concepts
- Make sure each section makes sense on its own – don't make the reader have to remember what was in one section to understand another
- Consider including contact details for readers to obtain additional information or clarification

Pictures

- Use pictures/symbols to help make text easier to understand, but keep in mind that too many pictures can be confusing
- Ensure the pictures have a purpose and match the content

Format

For ease of reading, use:

- 14-point font
- A typeface such as Arial, Times New Roman, or Calibri
- Plenty of white space
- Bullet points, bold text and headings to separate information and highlight important pieces
- Good contrast between text and background colours

Avoid:

- Italics – they are difficult to read
- ALL CAPS – they are difficult to read and can seem like "yelling"
- Curly or unusual fonts such as *Brush Script*, *Comic Sans*, etc.

Tips for Dementia-Friendly Spaces

Use this checklist to assess your workplace environment and develop your action plan for making the space more dementia friendly.

If changes are not possible right away (or outside your control), consider what you can do in the meantime – such as developing the communication skills to support people living with dementia to navigate the space.

Lighting

Check if satisfactory or leave blank if not applicable	Notes/Improvements
<input type="checkbox"/> Inside lighting is adequate to improve visibility	
<input type="checkbox"/> Light fixtures, window coverings and lamps are positioned to avoid bright glare and dark shadows	
<input type="checkbox"/> All entrances and exits are well lit to provide a safe and welcoming atmosphere	

Sound

Check if satisfactory or leave blank if not applicable	Notes/Improvements
<input type="checkbox"/> Radio, background music or other sources of noise are minimized	
<input type="checkbox"/> Quiet areas are available to provide a less distracting atmosphere and/or hold private discussions	
<input type="checkbox"/> PA system delivers clearly audible announcements, when necessary	

Tips:

- Offer periods of time when background music and other sources of noise (e.g., phones, PA systems) are completely turned off
- Consider sound dampening building materials and decor (e.g., acoustic wall panels, fabric furniture, curtains, etc.)
- Try to work/work with people living with dementia as far as possible from the noisy area in your space (e.g., reception, kitchen)

Tips for dementia-friendly interactions from behind a mask!

The global COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way we interact in our communities and public spaces. Staying connected and engaged is a challenge for all of us, but particularly for people living with dementia. Ensuring the community is dementia friendly has become even more important.

Here are some things you can do in your workplace to build on your dementia-friendly communication skills while keeping everyone safe.

Lead with empathy...

- Like many of us, people living with dementia may be isolated from family and friends because of physical distancing restrictions
- The isolation can affect mental health, leading to increased anxiety and/or confusion
- Try to meet people "where they are" rather than expecting them to "be where you are"
- Allow them to express themselves and mirror their emotions

Keep in mind what the person living with dementia may be experiencing...

- They may be less aware of current events and have difficulty understanding the need for personal protective equipment (PPE) and other precautions
- They may also have difficulty keeping up with and following the rules because safety protocols can vary depending on the setting and change frequently due to local conditions
- They may have difficulty moving about in the space if there is a lot more signage or familiar routes/landmarks have been changed to accommodate spacing requirements

So, if the person has questions or concerns about your procedures...

- Stay calm, respectful and patient and use simplified explanations
- Consider displaying clear signage with examples of your organization's protocols that people can refer to if they need a reminder
- Consider additional trained staff/greeters to offer support if people become disoriented in the space or uncertain about safety requirements

Dementia-Friendly Canada webpage

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Alzheimer Society

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Dementia-Friendly Canada

3 min read

By the end of the decade, almost one million Canadians will live with dementia. The impact of dementia is and will continue to be felt across all borders, sectors and cultures. We must act and build a dementia-friendly Canada now.



Acknowledgments



Financial contribution from



Public Health Agency of Canada Agence de la santé publique du Canada

The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the views of the Public Health Agency of Canada.





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