

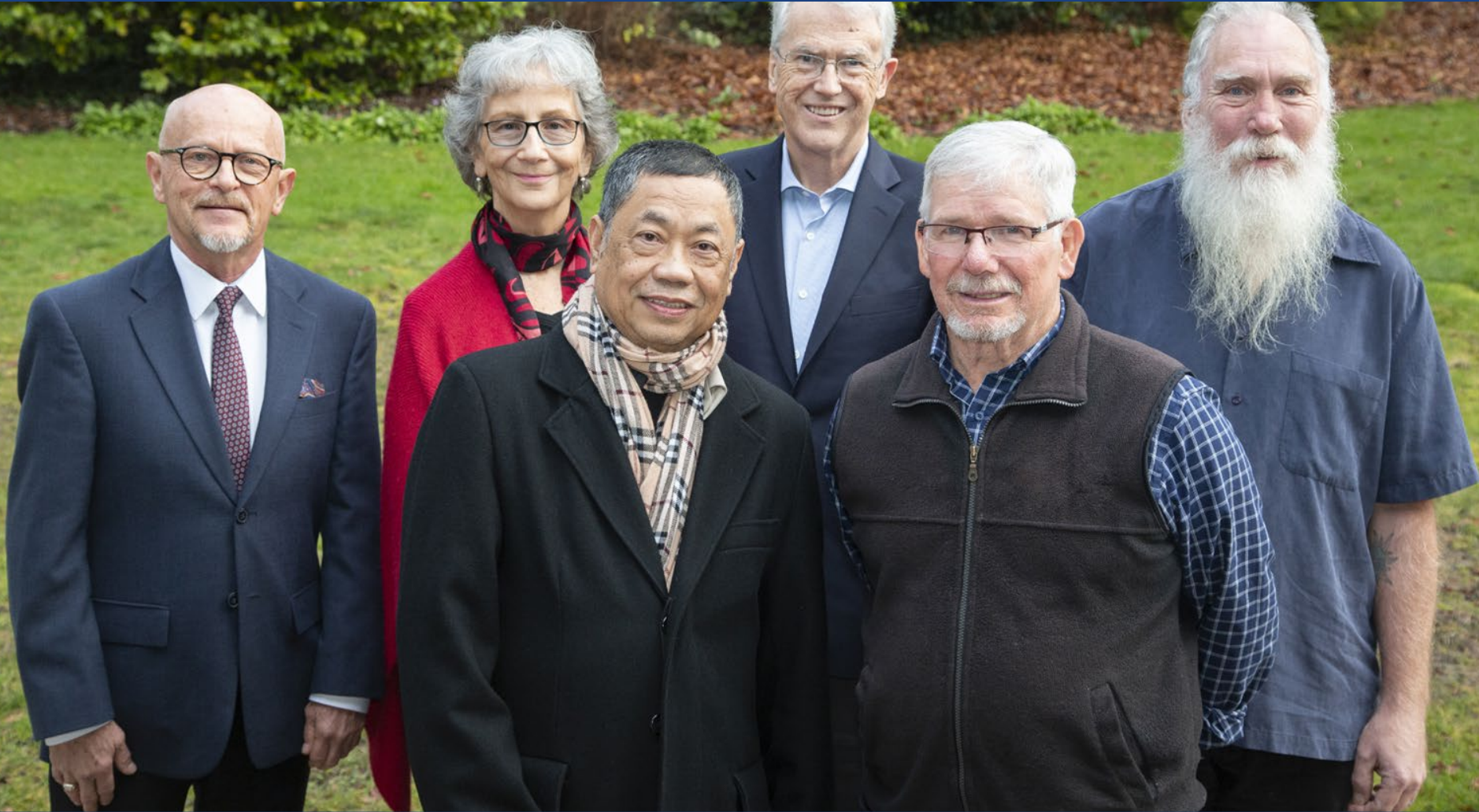
# Dementia-Friendly Canada

Building dementia-friendly  
communities

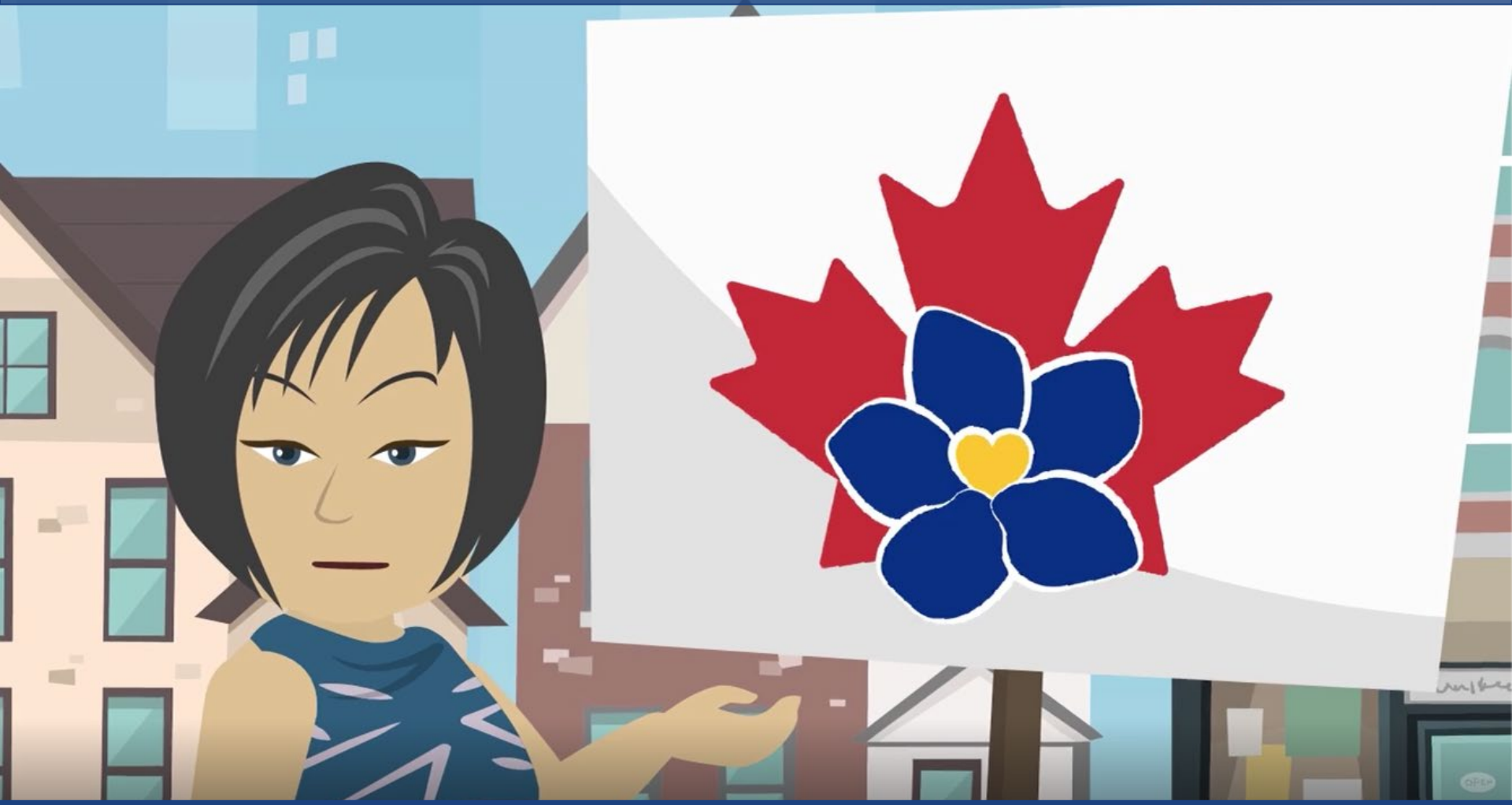
March 9, 2022



# Imagining a Dementia-Friendly Canada



# What is a dementia-friendly community?



# Building dementia-friendly communities





# Building dementia-friendly communities

*DO YOU WORK IN...*



**RECREATION &  
LIBRARY**



**RETAIL &  
RESTAURANT**

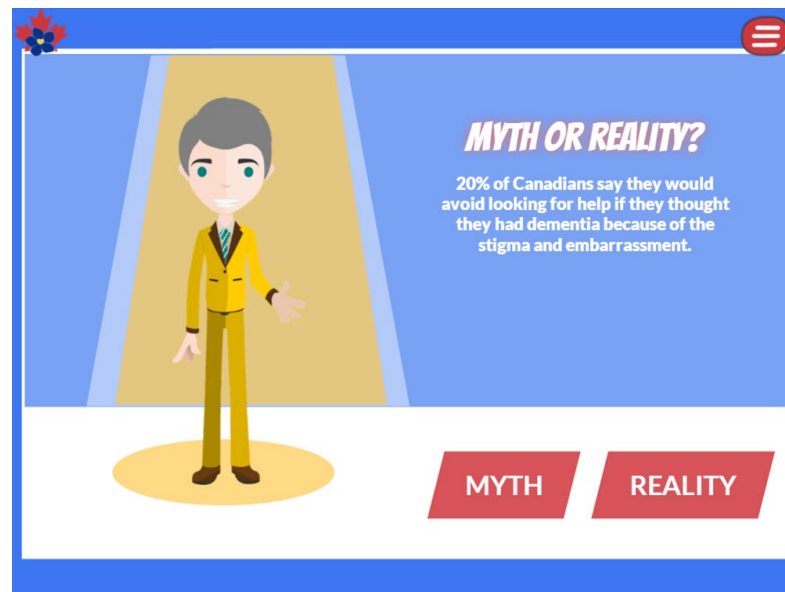
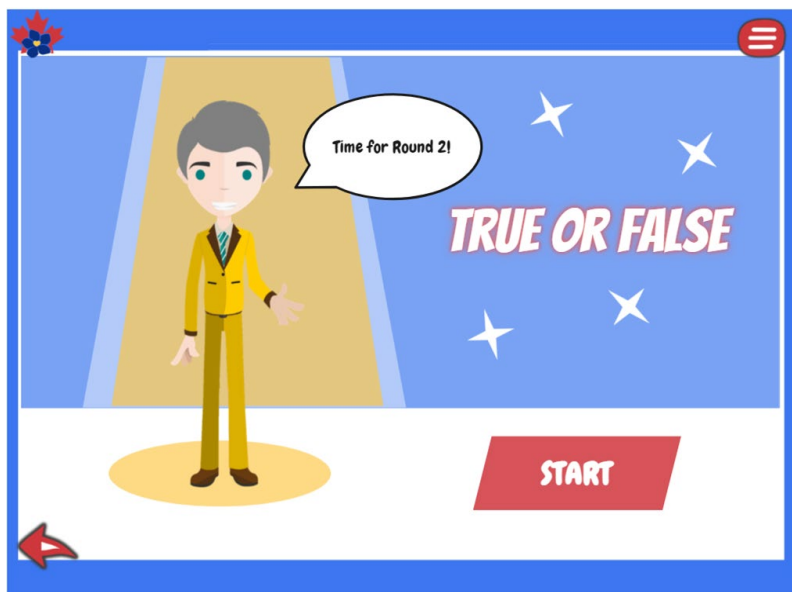


**PUBLIC TRANSIT**

# Building dementia-friendly communities



# Dementia-Friendly quiz



# Course resources



## Tips for Dementia-Friendly Interactions

### Offer Appropriate Help

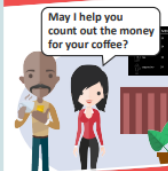
- Consider wearing a nametag to help identify you as staff/someone who can help
- Approach from the front in a friendly and open manner
- Remove your hat and/or sunglasses so your facial expressions are more visible
- Get the person's attention and introduce yourself – move in their line of sight, then 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 payment card...



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

...has trouble remembering a PIN, password, dates, or previous transactions...



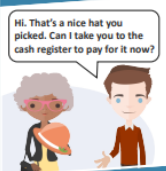
Be patient and take them to a quiet place, if possible. Being quizzed for details or feeling rushed can increase frustration and anxiety.

...has difficulty filling out forms...



Offer to read 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.

...takes an item without paying...



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

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## 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	

**Tip:** Consider offering sensory-friendly periods where the lighting is adjusted

### 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 system) are completely turned off
- Consider sound dampening building materials and décor (e.g., acoustic wall panels, fabric furniture, curtains, etc.)
- Try to seat/work with people living with dementia as far as possible from the noisy areas in your space (e.g., reception, kitchen)

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# Course resources



## 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's 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:

- ✓ A person living with dementia
- ✓ Challenging, life changing, stressful
- ✓ Changes in behaviour (speak to how behaviour has changed)
- ✓ Reactive behaviour
- ✓ Responsive behaviour
- ✓ Respectful terms that acknowledge the person is an adult (e.g., "clothing protector" or "smock")

#### Language to avoid:

- ✗ 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
- ✗ Terms that are typically associated with children and inadvertently infantilize people living with dementia (e.g., "bib")
- ✗ "Elder speak" / patronizing language such as "sweetie" or "dear"

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## 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"
- Cursive or unusual fonts such as *Brush Script*, *Comic Sans*, *Comic*, etc.

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# Course resources



## Tips for dementia-friendly interactions from behind a mask<sup>1,2</sup>

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

[Your Society: Canada](#) | [Change Your Society](#) ▾

[1-800-616-8816](#) | [Contact](#) | [Newsletter Sign Up](#) | [Français](#)

Alzheimer *Society*

What are you looking for?



[DONATE NOW](#)

[About dementia](#) ▾

[Help and support](#) ▾

[Take action](#) ▾

[Research](#) ▾

[What's happening](#) ▾

[About us](#) ▾

[Take action](#) / [Become dementia-friendly](#) / [Dementia-Friendly Canada](#)

## Dementia-Friendly Canada

2 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.





# Register for the course

## Dementia-Friendly resources

### Online education



**Building Dementia-Friendly Communities online education for: Recreation and Library, Restaurant and Retail, and Public Transportation.**

The course will provide a foundational knowledge of dementia, and outline the considerations that organizations can include in their social and physical environments in order to better support and include people living with dementia.

➔ [Register for this course on ALZeducate!](#)

# Accessing the course

**NAVIGATION**

- My home
  - Site home
  - My profile
- Current course
  - Building Dementia-Friendly Communities - Pilot**
    - Participants
    - Badges
  - My courses
  - Courses

**ADMINISTRATION**

- Course administration
  - Grades
- My profile settings




## Welcome!

We're happy that you're interested in learning about how organizations and their employees can help to build dementia-friendly communities where people living with dementia and their care partners feel welcomed, included and supported.

This course includes four modules with a variety of interactive activities to help you learn the material and check your knowledge as you go. There are also additional resources that you can use in your workplace.

Once you have completed all four course modules, you will receive a certificate of completion. Note that the quizzes and activities in each module are not scored and do not count towards your certificate. When you're finished the course, we would also appreciate your feedback by completing the course evaluation survey

**Audience:** Employees of organizations in the retail (stores and restaurants), library and recreation, and public transit sectors of the community.  
**Estimated time:** 75 minutes (modules + discussion)



Click **Help** in the navigation bar (at the top of your screen) for more information on technical requirements and how to use this course. Information on enabling cookies and popups can be found under [Technical Considerations > Browser Requirements](#).

# Course completion certificate



Dementia-Friendly  
CANADA

The Alzheimer Societies of Canada thank

**Heather Cowie**

for successfully completing the  
**Building Dementia-Friendly Communities**  
online education

SEPTEMBER 13, 2021



hdQWAhxYyE

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Dementia-Friendly  
CANADA



# Course pilot

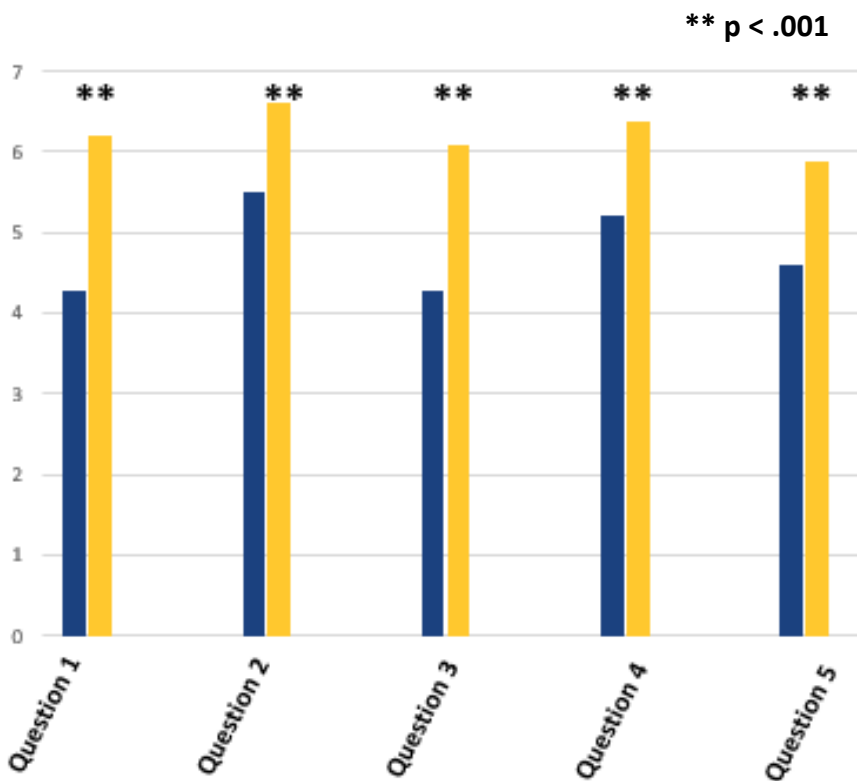
## Pre- and post-course surveys included:

- 16 questions on demographics and employment information
- 5 questions concerning general awareness of dementia
- 14 questions on current dementia knowledge and skills using a 7-pt scale
- 3 questions on organizational readiness
- 1 question concerning whether ones organization has plans to implement dementia-friendly changes

Employment sector	
Recreation	23
Library	30
Retail	4
Restaurant	1
Public Transportation	8
Other	37

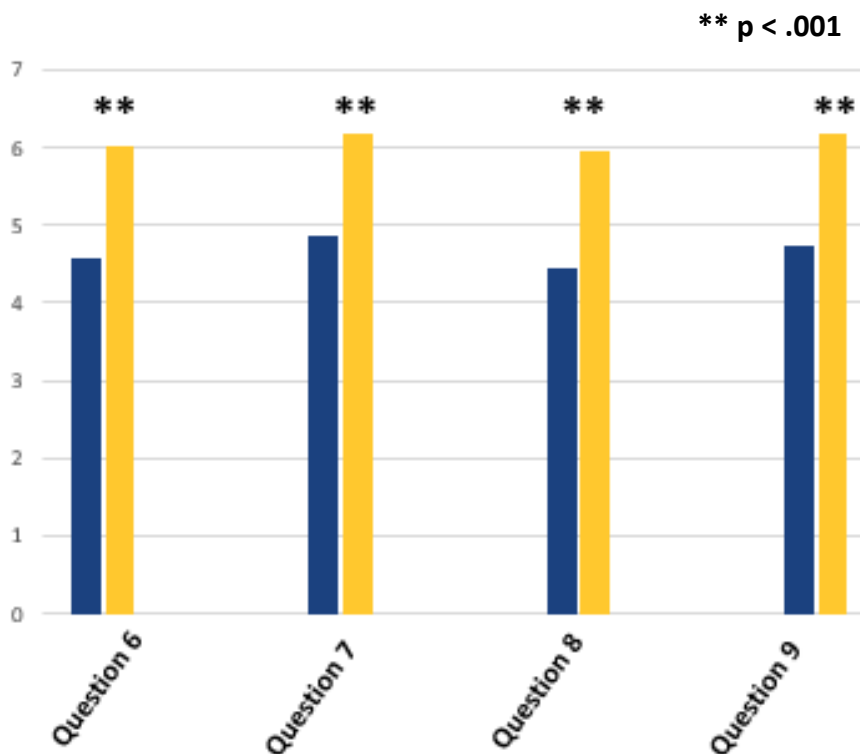
In your professional role, do you work with members of the public?	
Yes	87
No	15

# Course pilot: Current knowledge and skills



- **Q1:** I can describe what a dementia-friendly community is.
- **Q2:** I know why dementia-friendly communities and organizations are important.
- **Q3:** I can identify common myths about dementia.
- **Q4:** I understand how the attitudes/language of people in the community affect the experience of people living with dementia.
- **Q5:** I can recognize the signs that someone might be living with dementia.

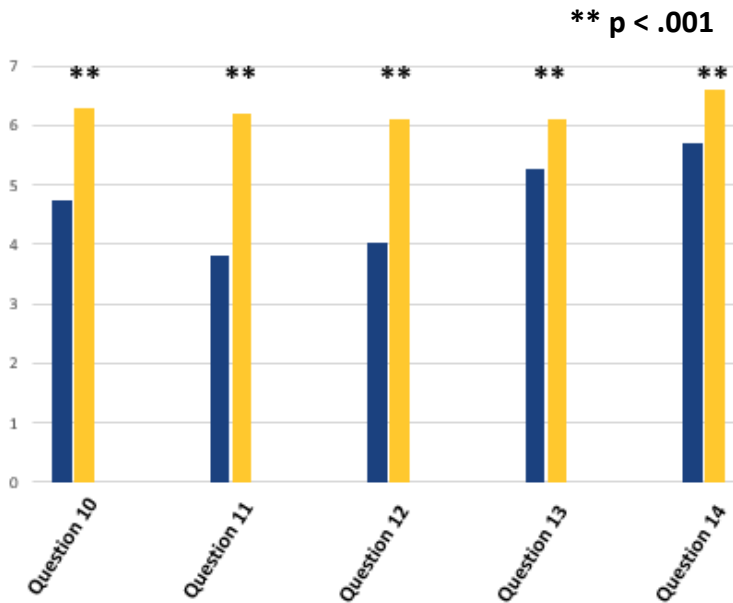
# Course pilot: Current knowledge and skills



- **Q6:** I can explain how dementia might affect the way a person interacts in a community social/professional environment.
- **Q7:** I can describe how dementia might affect a person's ability to communicate.
- **Q8:** I feel comfortable using dementia-friendly communication strategies to interact with people living with dementia and their care partners.
- **Q9:** I know how to offer help/support/service to someone living with dementia in a respectful manner.

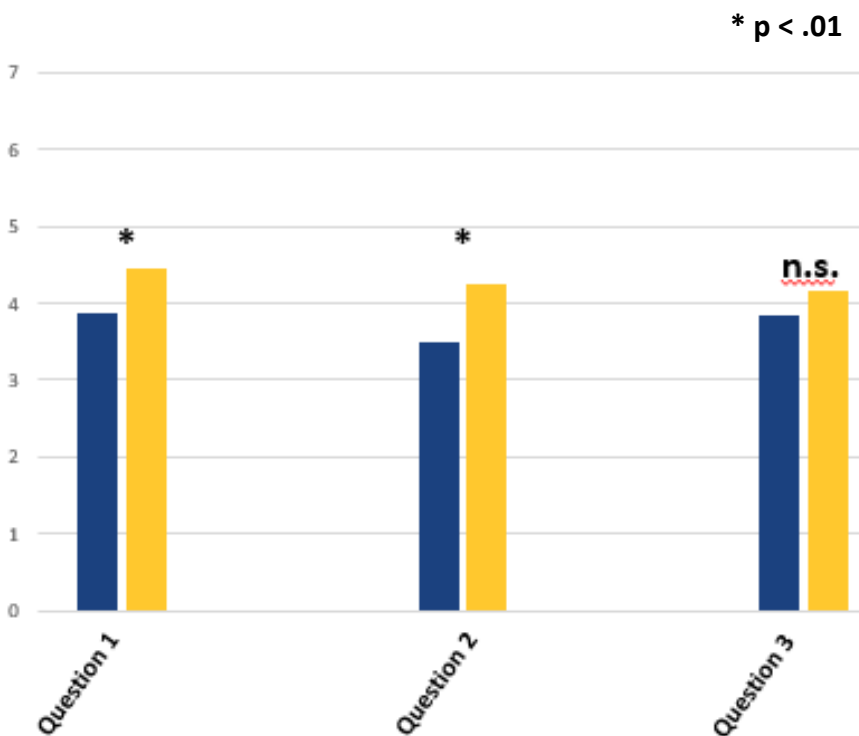


# Course pilot: Current knowledge and skills



- **Q10:** I know what to do if someone appears to be wandering or lost.
- **Q11:** I recognize ways to adapt the physical environment (design, lighting, sound, signs, furniture, etc.) so the space is easier for people living with dementia to use.
- **Q12:** I can think of ways to adapt my organization's services, programming, practices, and/or policies to make them more inclusive and supportive for people living with dementia.
- **Q13:** I feel confident that I can contribute to making my organization more dementia-friendly through my own knowledge and actions.
- **Q14:** I know how to contact the Alzheimer Society for resources and/or support to become dementia friendly.

# Course pilot: Organizational Readiness



- **Q1:** The people in my organization are knowledgeable about dementia.
- **Q2:** At work, employees share information and strategies for including/supporting people living with dementia.
- **Q3:** The physical space where I work is dementia friendly.

# What course participants are saying

It's a well-designed, thoughtful course that outlines the different areas service providers can focus on. It empowers people in all levels of an organization to have conversations and destigmatize what living with dementia or caring for someone living with dementia means. We all have a role we can play and the barriers that we can chip away can help so many others and hopefully develop thriving and connected communities.

Community Librarian



# What course participants are saying

Thank you so much for creating such relevant and much needed training. I feel that my organization will benefit from this training - both my front-line staff and the staff working in our community centres and arenas.

Recreation Supervisor

I loved everything! The layout of the course and topics covered along with the lived experiences help illustrate what people in our communities are going through and how we can do better. It made me think of how some interactions that didn't go well were from my lack of understanding and there's hope that as more laypeople learn, we can build more empathetic societies.

Community Librarian

# Course impact

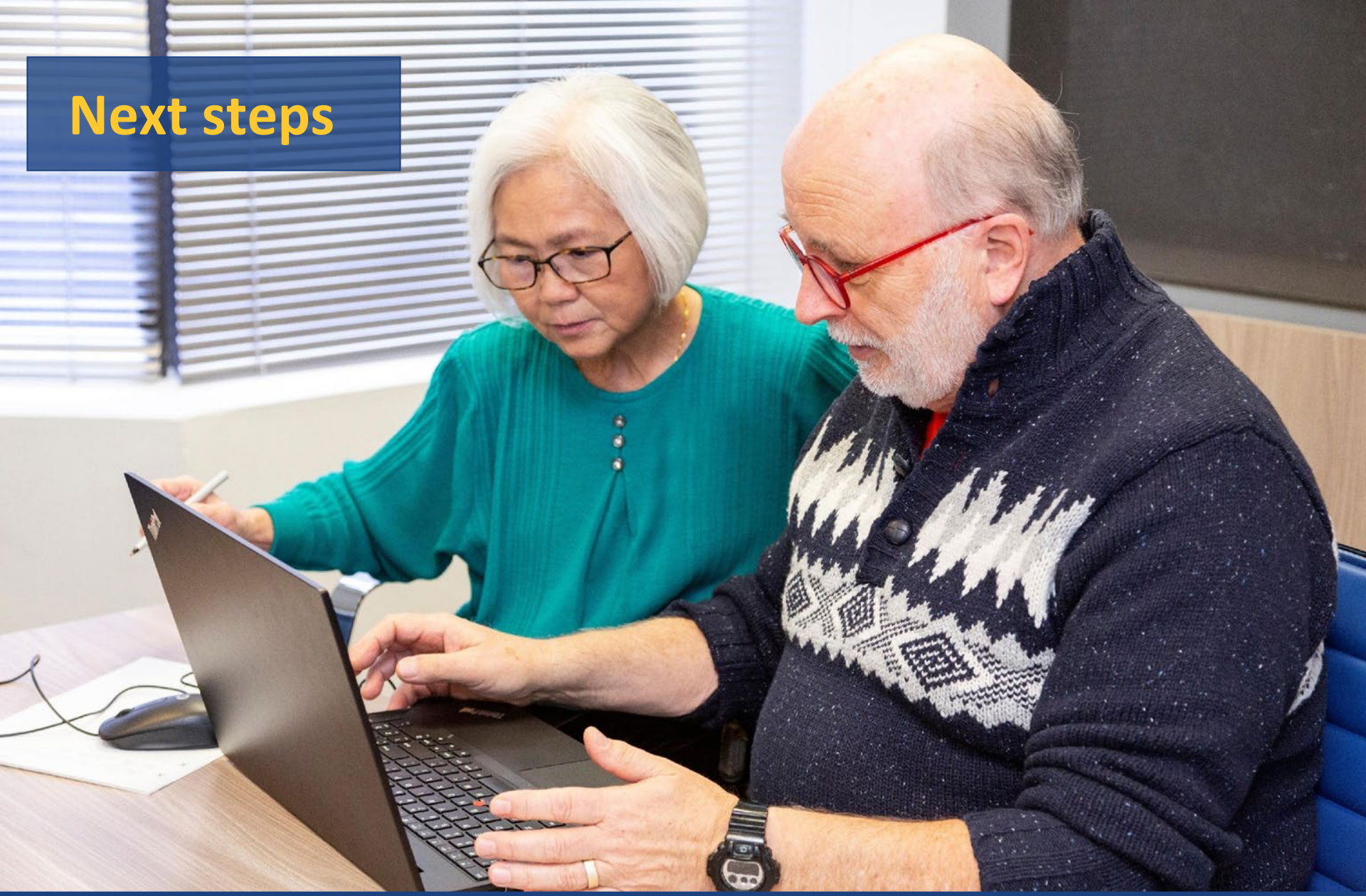
As soon as the course was completed, I went into the lobby area of our library and removed additional furnishings and re-organized the space for a better flow. I looked for "visual noise" in the space and removed some unnecessary signage. We will be reviewing our library set up so that once we re-open we are more dementia friendly. I also shared salient points from the training with my staff.

Branch Supervisor

# What people with lived experience are saying

- The [*Building dementia-friendly* communities] course used example from everyday life as I experience it.
- I thought that this was a wonderful tool that brings light to dementia. A lot of people still think of a person living with dementia as someone that stays in a home and hidden.
- Awareness, respect and communication from staff members and understanding of physical space are all vital. Anyone can make a difference with knowledge.
- I think most people are willing to be helpful. Often, we/they just don't think of things we can do. The course provides ideas to recognize and help situations.

# Next steps





# Questions





Heather Cowie



Sana Aziz



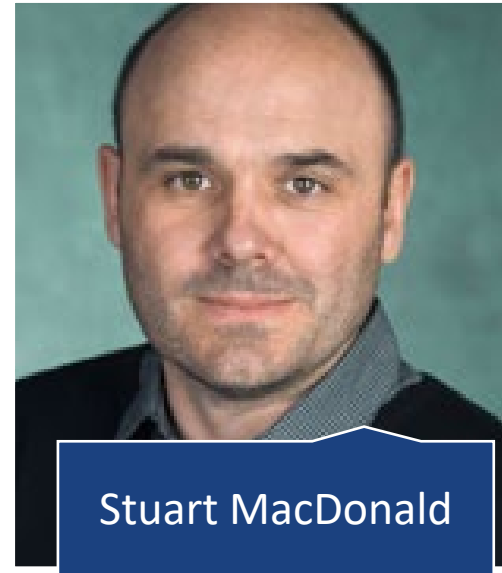
Jennifer Vicente-Licardo



Maggie Scanlon



Susan Oster



Stuart MacDonald

# Acknowledgements

**Alzheimer Society**  
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**Alzheimer Society**  
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