

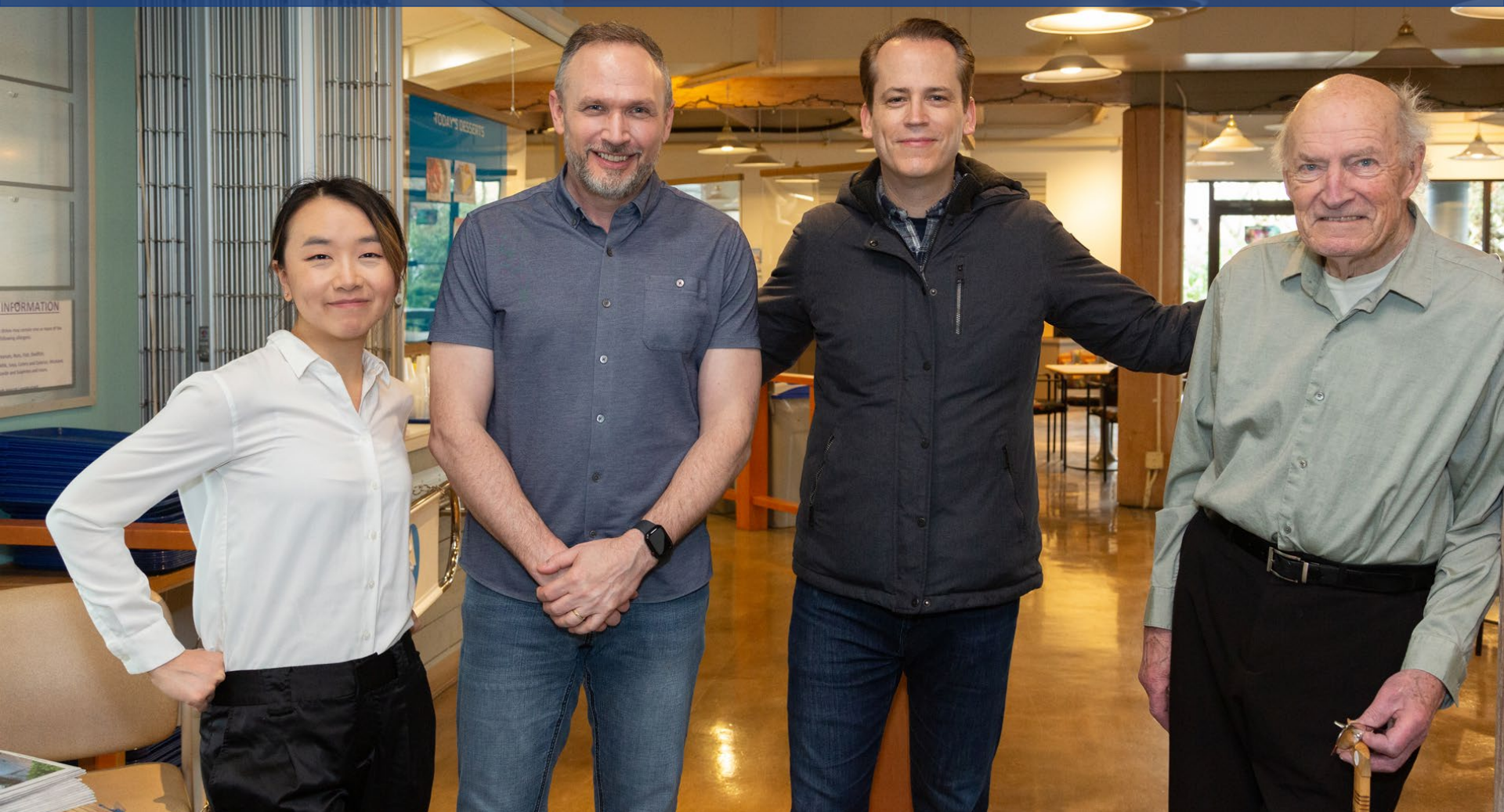


Dementia-Friendly Canada

Reflections and next steps

March 8, 2023

Imagining a Dementia-Friendly Canada



Dementia-Friendly Canada team



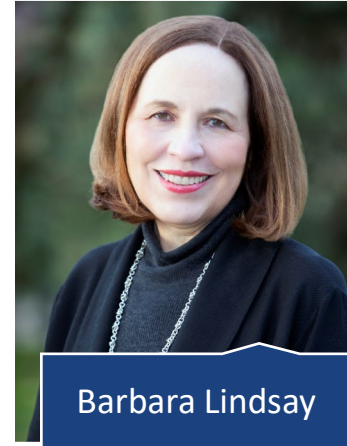
Sana Aziz



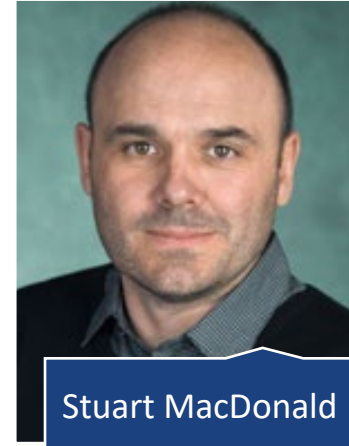
Heather Cowie



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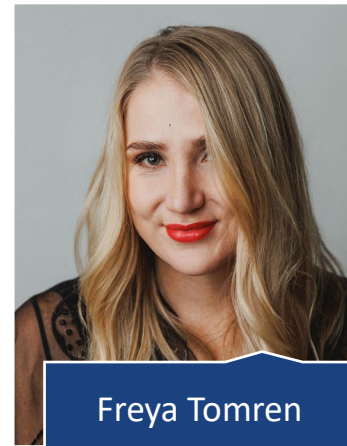
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Dementia-Friendly Canada webpage

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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.



Ways you can be dementia friendly series



Building dementia-friendly communities



Building dementia-friendly communities tip sheets

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'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:	Language to avoid:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A 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 Is 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., "bab") "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 payment card...
 - Help them you count out the money for your coffee.
- ...has trouble remembering a PIN, password, dates, or previous transaction...
 - I get so embarrassed when I forget these.
- ...has difficulty filling out forms...
 - Land you sign the form right here...
- ...takes an item without paying...
 - Oh, that's nice but you forgot. Can I take you to the cash register to pay for it now?
- ...ask if you 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 helps for details or feeling rushed can increase frustration and anxiety, and allow time for a response.
- ...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 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.



Program evaluation

- Pre-test (baseline) assessment
- Post-test assessment
- One-year follow-up

Baseline findings: Pre- vs. post-test assessment

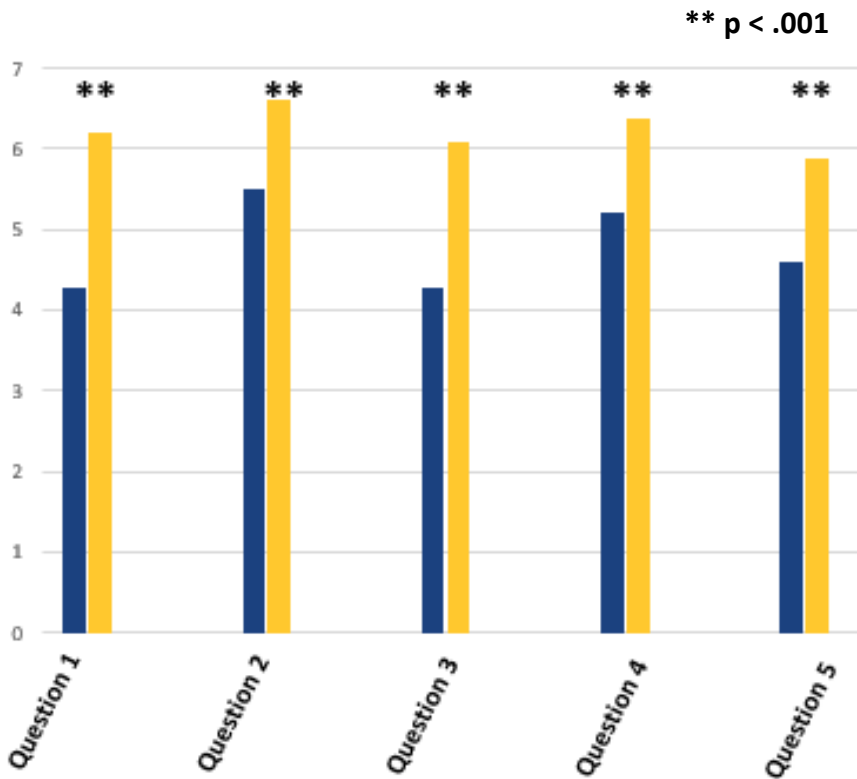
Pre- and post-course surveys included:

- 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 one's organization has plans to implement dementia-friendly changes

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

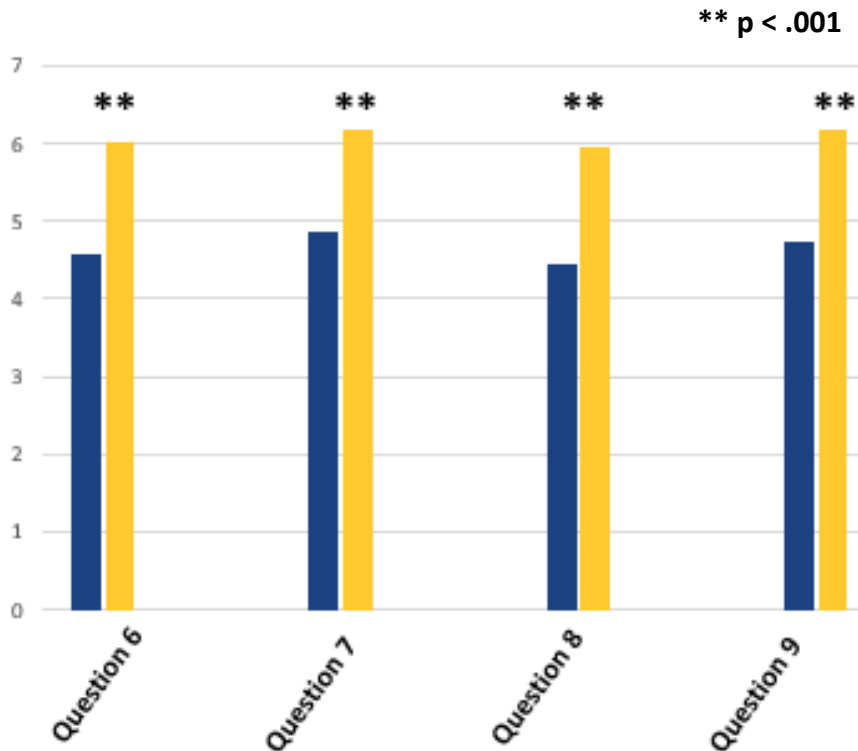
In your professional role, do you work with members of the public?	
Yes	87
No	15

Baseline Findings: Current knowledge and skills



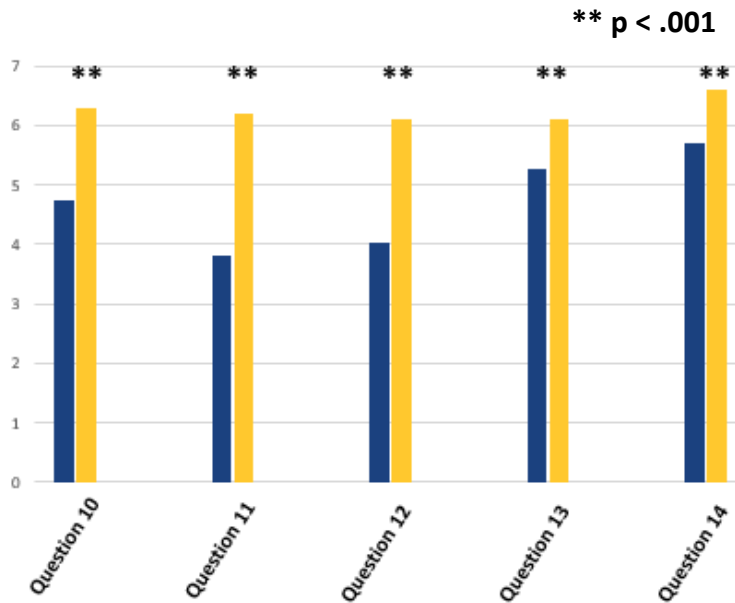
- **Q1:** I can describe what a dementia-friendly community is.
- **Q2:** I know why dementia-friendly communities and organizations are important.
- **Q3:** I can identify common myths about dementia.
- **Q4:** I understand how the attitudes/language of people in the community affect the experience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

Course pilot: Current knowledge and skills



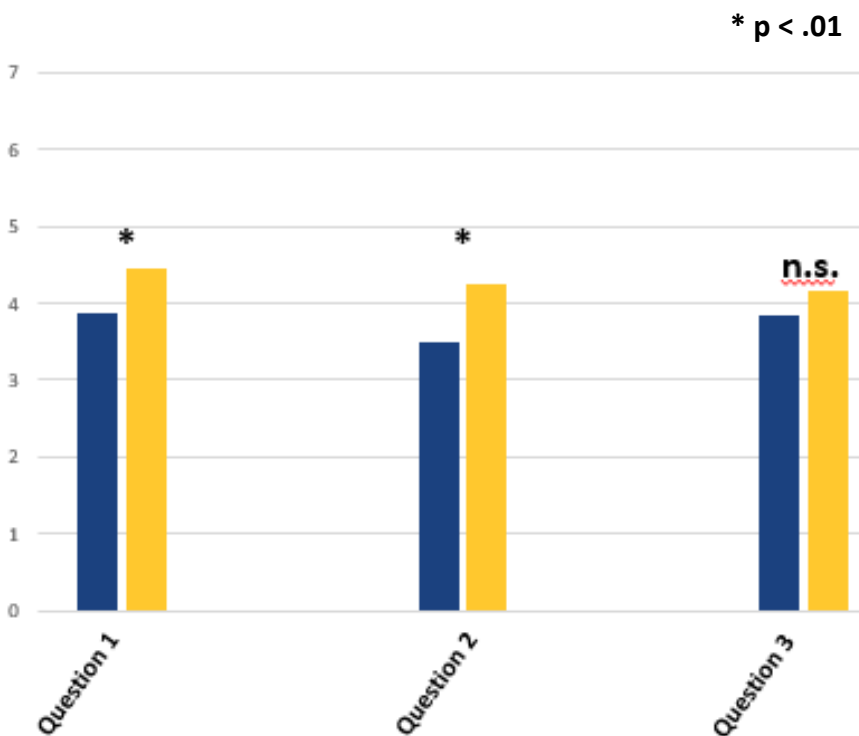
- **Q6:** I can explain how dementia might affect the way a person interacts in a community social/professional environment.
- **Q7:** I can describe how dementia might affect a person's ability to communicate.
- **Q8:** I feel comfortable using dementia-friendly communication strategies to interact 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.

Longitudinal assessment

- Gauging experience
- Assessing changes
- Identifying translation of objectives
- Soliciting feedback
- Sharing successes and challenges
- Evaluating retention



Longitudinal assessment



Current employment sector

Library	11
Recreation	6
Public transportation	3
Government	2
Police	1
Volunteer	1
Arts and entertainment	1
Total	25

Modules completed

Recreation and library	19
Public transportation	4
All three	2

Longitudinal Assessment: Select highlights

- **76%** of participants **recommended the course** to colleagues (most common), family or friends.
- **52%** of participants were fairly confident and **24%** were completely confident about interacting with individuals with dementia.
- **40%** of participants reported **learning information** that resulted in **changes** in their daily work routine.

Translating learning objectives into action

- 64% Continuing to learn about dementia and how to be dementia friendly.
- 72% Recognize how dementia affects a person's interactions and making adjustments to the way you interact with people who may be living with dementia.
 - Using dementia-friendly communication strategies and offering dementia-friendly customer service.
- 36% Providing dementia-friendly built environments with appropriate wayfinding, signage, lighting and acoustics.
 - Implementing inclusive and supportive services, programming, activities, policies and practices.
- 64% Are prepared to assist people living with dementia in a supportive way.

Key elements missing

- More interactive learning elements (e.g., videos, quizzes, etc.).
- More detail on what dementia is and how to recognize if someone is living with dementia.
- More detail on how to communicate with and support someone living with dementia in my workplace.
- More detail on how to make current built environments (e.g., workplace, public spaces) more dementia friendly.

40% More detail on how to adapt programming to be dementia friendly.

44% More alternative strategies (communication and approach) for challenging situations that may arise in public spaces.

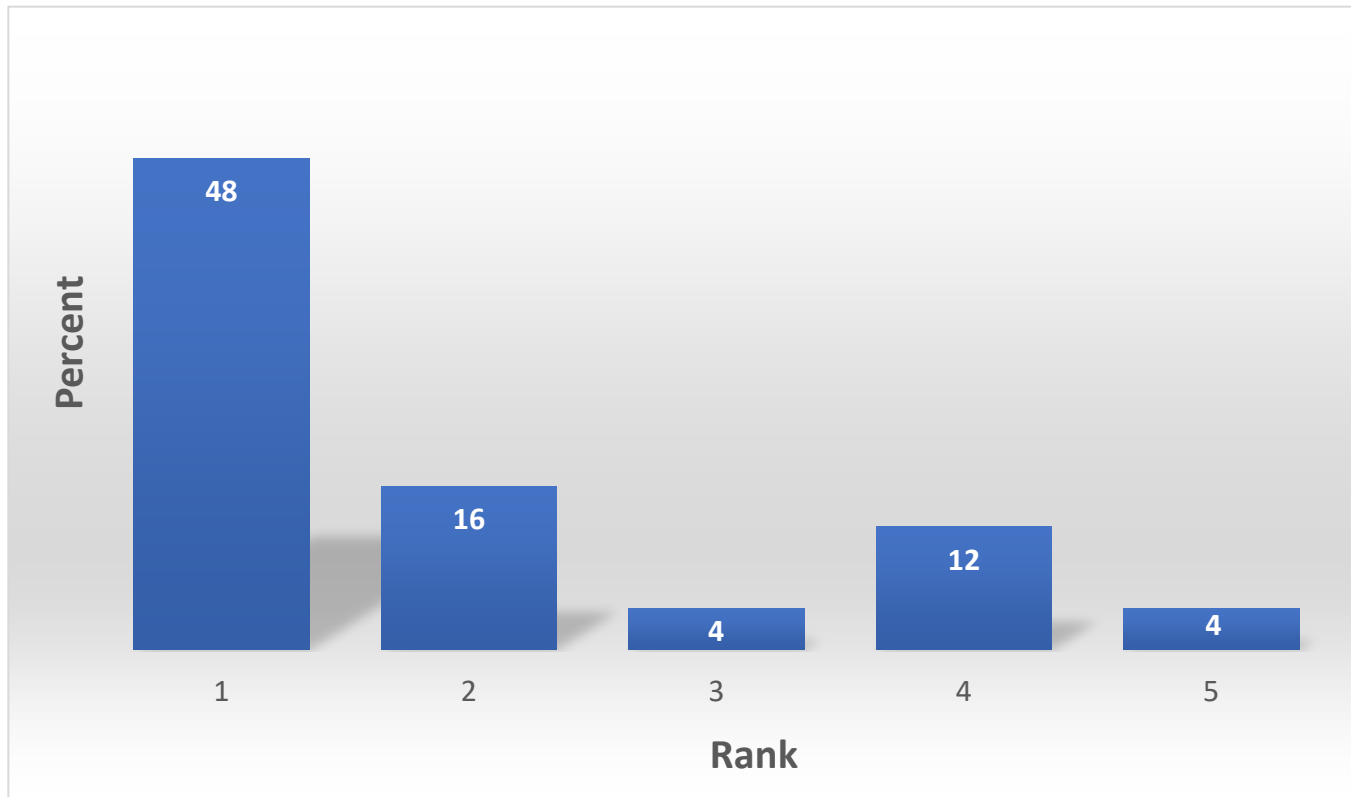
- More detail on how to support care partners of persons living with dementia who are coming to my organization.
- More examples specific to my employment sector.

Aspects of course that could be improved

- ↑↓ Basic knowledge conveyed about dementia.
- ↑↓ Clear explanation of dementia-friendly communities
- ↑↓ Strategies for implementing dementia-friendly changes (e.g., physical adaptations) in the workplace.
- ↑↓ Strategies for clearly communicating with those with dementia.
- ↑↓ Strategies for adapting your organization's services or policies to make them more inclusive and supportive for people living with dementia.

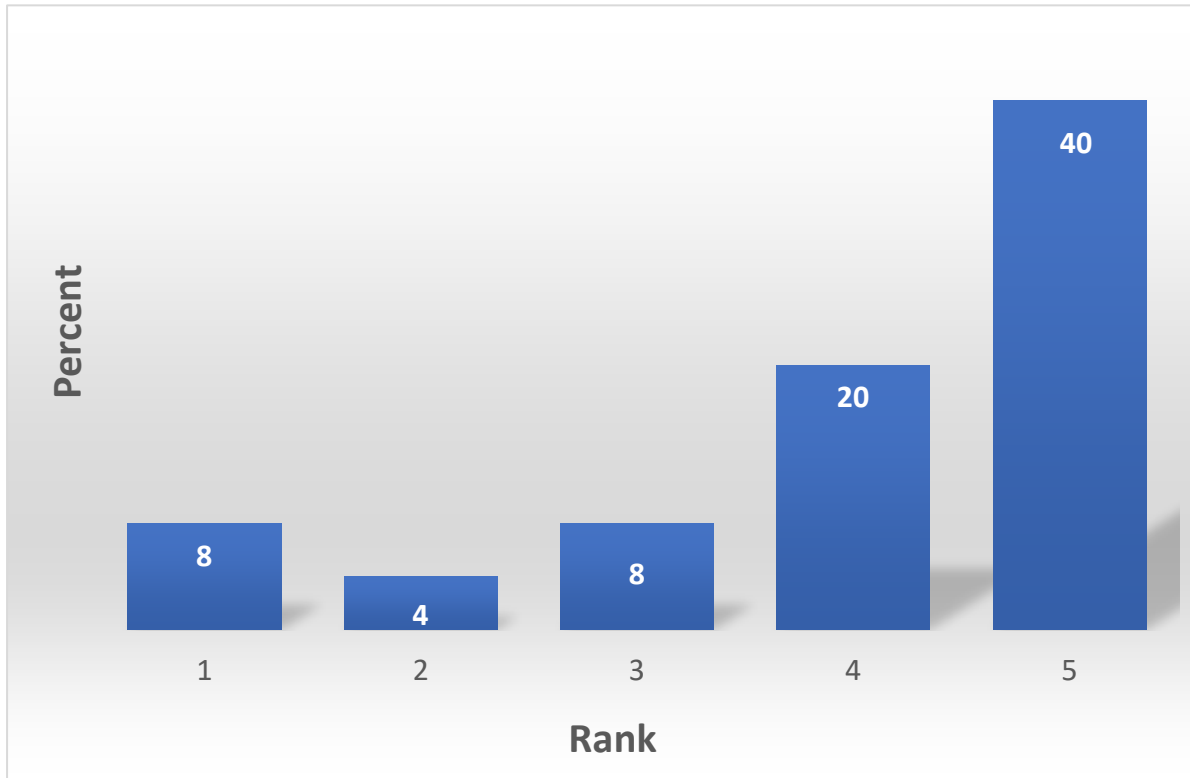
Aspects of course that could be improved

48% of participants **ranked** “Strategies for adapting organization services” as needing the **most improvement**.

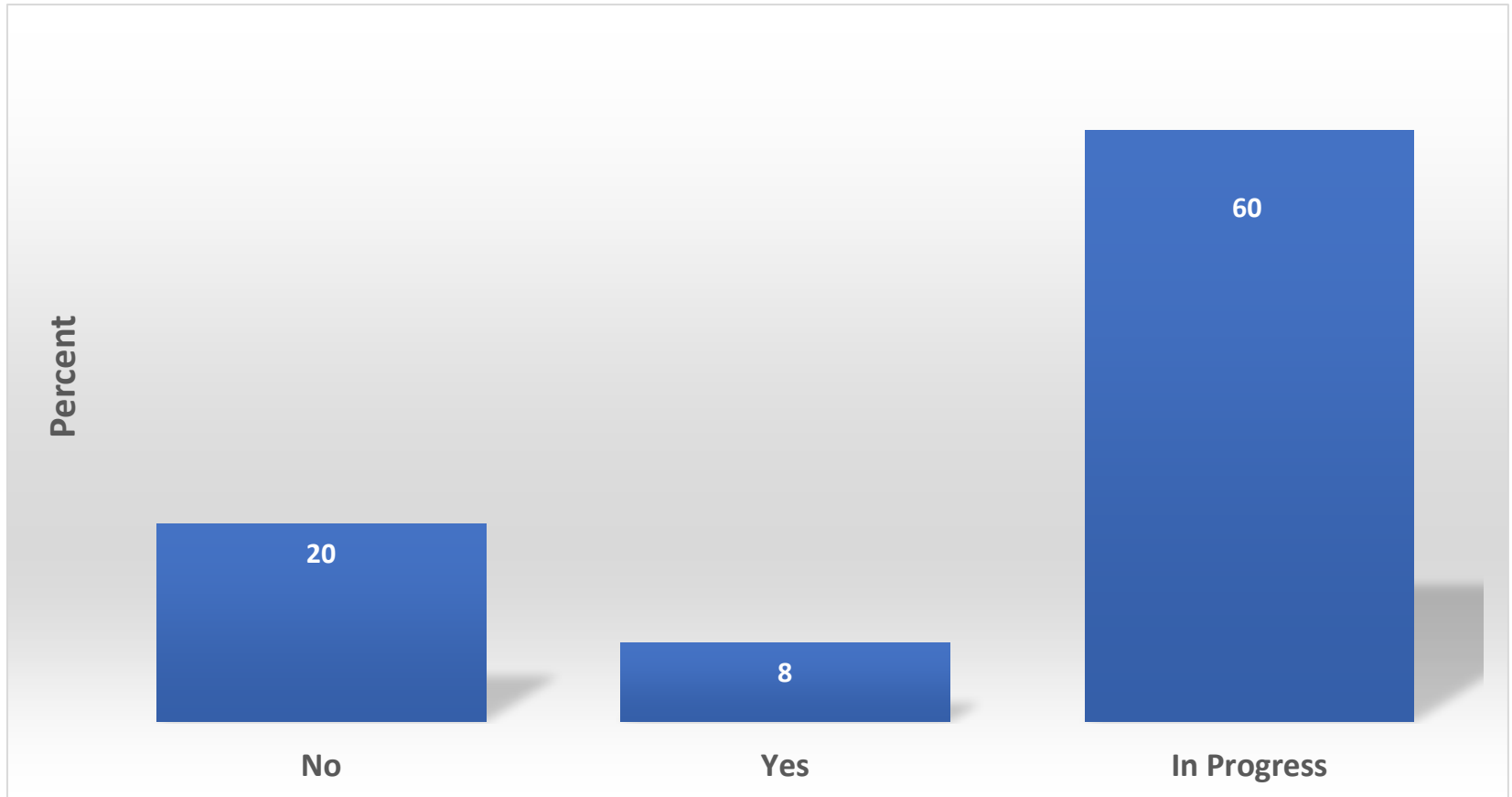


Aspects of course that could be improved

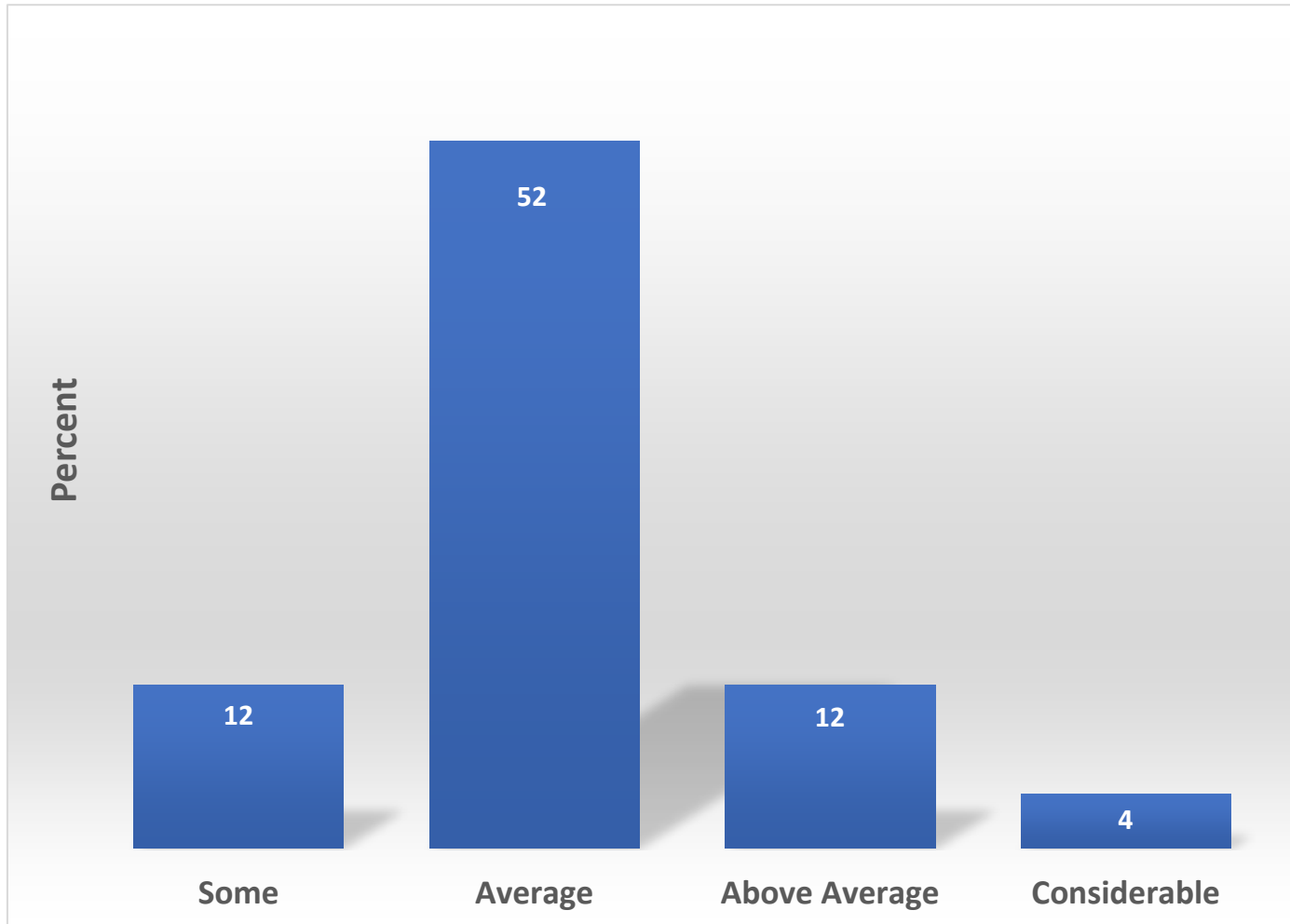
The **area requiring the least improvement** was identified as the provision of more basic knowledge about dementia.



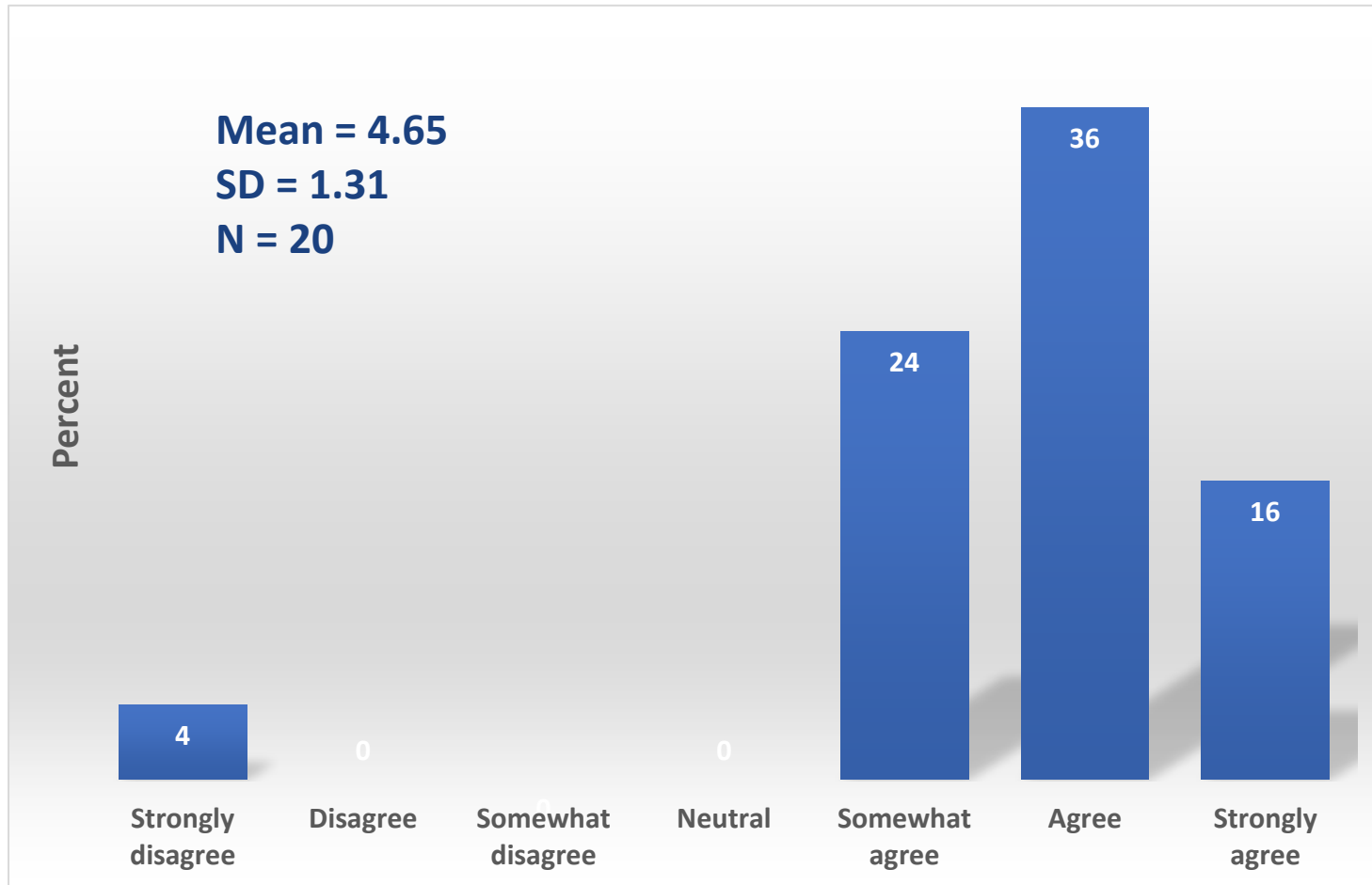
Implementation of change



Knowledge retention



Can my actions make a difference?



Summarizing key findings

70% of participants strongly agreed with the statement that the course would be beneficial to people across the country



What course participants are saying

Theme: Changes in the workplace

I learned how to recognize signs of dementia and advised my team to waive overdue fines on patron's accounts that exhibit these behaviours.

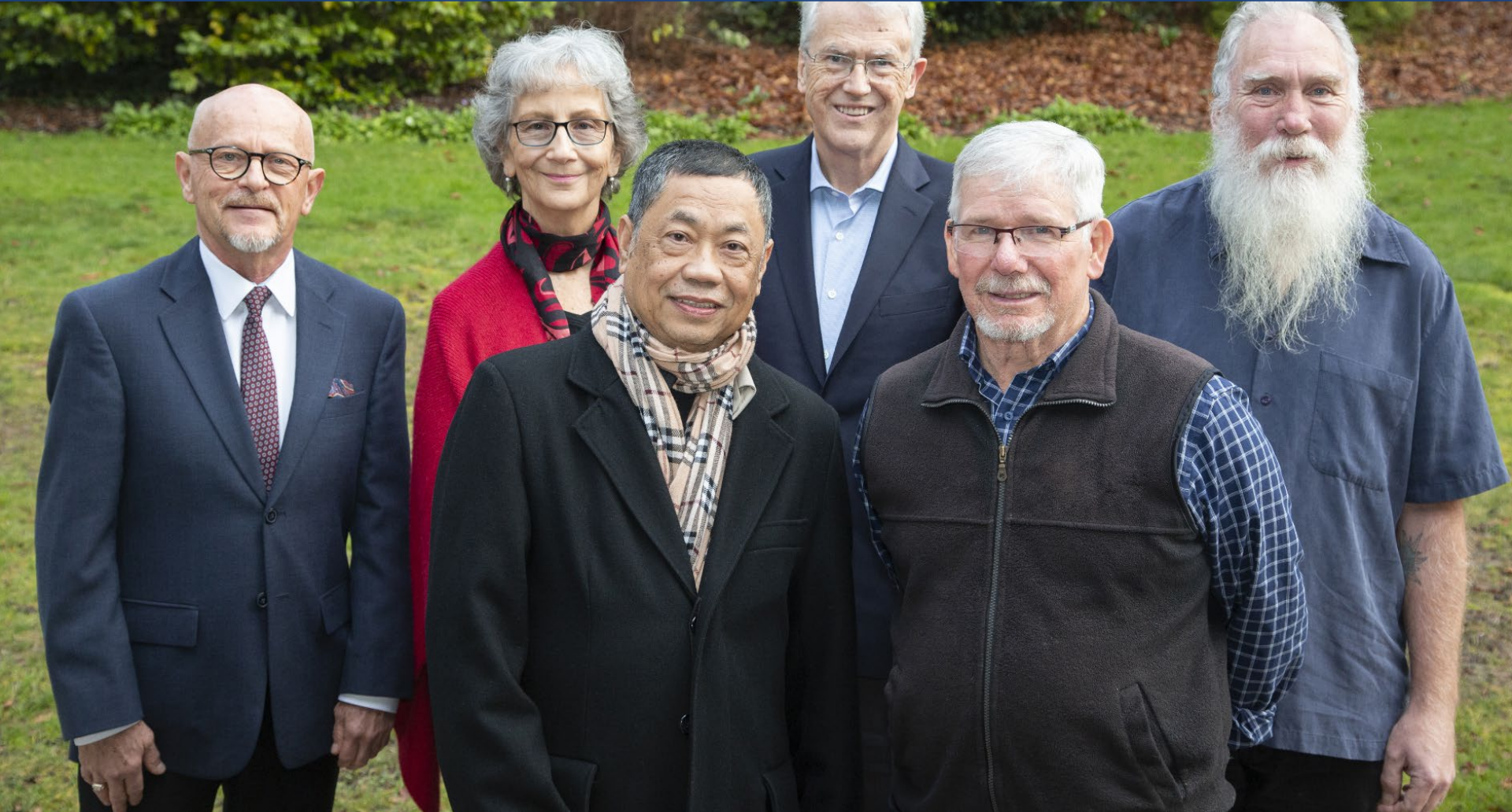
Community Librarian

Theme: Built environment

As soon as the course was completed, I went into the lobby area and re-organized the space for a better flow, including looking for "visual noise" and removing unnecessary signage.

Branch Supervisor

Dementia-Friendly Communities Awards



Next steps



Dementia-Friendly Canada team



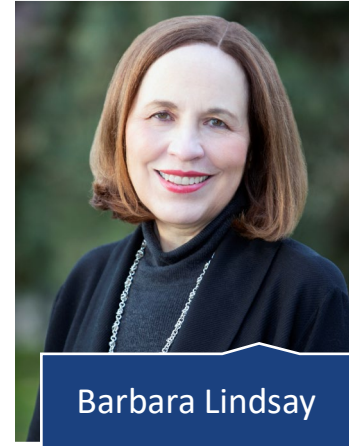
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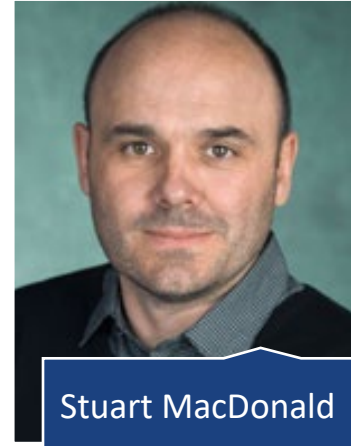
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