Creating Dementia Friendly Physical & Social Environments: A new resource for residential & respite care facilities

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Creating a Dementia Friendly Environment

- Shift emphasis from ‘condition’ to ‘experience’
- Active participant not passive recipient
- Person centred care - relationship centred
- Physical environment does not exist in a vacuum
What is a Dementia Friendly Environment?

...a cohesive system of support that recognises the experiences of the person with dementia and best provides assistance for the person to remain engaged in everyday life in a meaningful way.
Why another resource?

- Large volume of information / evidence
- Practical application for residential/respite care setting
- Support decision-making
1. What is a typical day like for residents with dementia?

2. How do staff fit into that day of experiences?

3. How well does the building work for staff, residents, family and others?
‘Living the Experience’ vignettes
Section One

Section 1.1
How to use this handbook

Section 1.2
Looking out from the inside: The experiential framework and principles of designing a dementia friendly environment
Section Two: Living Experiences

- Presentation of Self
- Eating
- Personal Enjoyment
- Bedroom
- Family Involvement & Community Connections
- Staff
- End of Life
I’m not ‘dear’ or ‘darling’

My name isn’t ‘luvvie’ or ‘love’

I’m not sweetheart

I’m not a baby

I am me
Eating
Personal Enjoyment

Reading
Eating out
Sex
Playing piano
Entertaining
Computers
Tap dancing

What did you do today?
Bedroom
Staff

Person Centred Care

What does it mean to you?

To me it means:

- relationships
- independence
- respect
- choice
- freedom
- dignity
End of Life
What can be done now?
What can be done with modifications?
What can be done when building a new facility?

Research evidence or design guide / expert consensus
Actions / strategies that may be useful
Examples of successful models / programs / elements of dementia friendly physical & social environment
Section Three

- Colour
- Interior Surfaces, Pattern and Texture
- Lighting
- Fixtures and Fittings
- Furniture
- Assistive Technology
- Gardens and Outdoor Spaces
Section 3 Information

- Key Messages
- Why is it so important?
- What does the literature say about…’?
- Evidence-based actions & strategies important in creating dementia friendly physical & social environments
Key Messages - Lighting

- Ensure light levels exceed minimum recommended light levels
- Balance natural and artificial light to achieve even light levels
- Eliminate glare
- Clean existing light systems regularly
Why is it so important?

- Low environmental light levels are believed to:
  - Accentuate sundowning
  - Impede wayfinding
  - Be responsible for a major proportion of falls amongst older people in residential care facilities.
  - Impact on an older person’s ability to perform activities of daily living, especially for those with cognitive impairment and reduced manual dexterity.

Everything relating to light has a consequence, and while providing appropriate lighting is complex, it is essential for the older person in the residential setting to see and function to maximum independence.
What does the literature say?

Quality & Quantity
Importance of natural light
Measuring light levels & light meters

The best lighting solutions bring natural light into buildings and lighting designers/architects have developed strategies for distributing it in effective ways such as:

- using a minimum of two sources of daylight, preferably from more than one direction
- locating large daylight sources out of the field of view
- encouraging taller ceilings and window openings to more deeply penetrate spaces
- using skylights, clerestories, and light shelves to reduce glare.
Ask a few staff members to wear sunglasses inside for several hours. How well can they:

- recognise faces,
- read signs, and
- see across a room?

If these staff members believe the facility may not be lit properly as a result of this exercise then obtain a more accurate measure of light levels using a light meter.
Evidence-based strategies & actions

- Arrange seating, dining tables and television screens to avoid glare from windows.

- Use dimming control technology and motion sensors to control light levels, to harvest daylight and adjust light levels for day and night variations.

- Develop a lighting maintenance schedule – lamps (tubes and bulbs) should be replaced when they dim and flicker.
Creating Dementia Friendly
Physical and Social Environments

SEE THE PERSON
WHO I WAS, IS WHO I AM
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