

Wednesday 13 May 2020

## Free online dementia courses for aged care workers during COVID-19 pandemic

Free, short, online courses have been announced by the Centre for Dementia Learning, Dementia Australia to assist frontline aged care staff delivering care to people living with dementia during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Dementia Australia CEO Maree McCabe said with recent changes and restrictions, aged care workers are more than ever, uniquely positioned to be observing new or changed behaviours in their clients and residents.

“Changes in routine can create uncertainty for people living with dementia which can sometimes leave them feeling distressed, confused and isolated,” Ms McCabe said.

“We want to support all those who work in aged care as much as possible during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The courses will increase the participants’ understanding of dementia and provide frameworks to help with problem solving.

“We know that where aged care staff know about the person in their care, understand their stage and form of dementia and are flexible in their approach, the better the outcomes for all.”

Nobuko Fujito, Care Manager at Salvation Army, Macquarie Lodge Aged Care Centre said, “The online learning courses are having a positive impact on our staff. They have given us new information to help clients during this time and I would definitely recommend the courses to other organisations.”

As participants work through the free online courses they will develop their own Dementia Practice Improvement Plan to practically apply what they have learned into their work.

Courses take just two hours to complete and can be done at the participant’s own pace, allowing a pause at any point.

“With the courses freely available online until 30 June, staff all over Australia, in cities, remote and regional areas, can access these modules,” Ms McCabe said.

“We know that more than 50 per cent of all people living in residential aged care have a diagnosis of dementia and there are estimates that it could be much higher than this in some aged care homes.

“People living with dementia are some of the most vulnerable people in our community right now, and increasing the focus on engagement and communication at this time of restricted physical contact is vital to ensure better care outcomes”.

“The Centre for Dementia Learning is a trusted, reliable provider of education and is committed to supporting staff in aged care and the aged care industry”.

“With increased demand for remote support during this pandemic, we want to support aged care workers and help them gain skills to respond to changed behaviours”.

“Now is a great opportunity for those in the aged care industry to explore and implement new strategies.”

The courses are the first two modules of a suite of online courses offered by the Centre for Dementia Learning. They are offered free to anyone within the aged care sector who signs up to the Dementia Australia mailing list before 30 June 2020. To find out more about the free online courses and other education options visit: <https://bit.ly/2WekA44> and use the Promo Code MRW to access.

-Ends-

Dementia Australia is the national peak body and charity for people, of all ages, living with all forms of dementia, their families and carers. It provides advocacy, support services, education and information. An estimated 459,000 people have dementia in Australia. This number is projected to reach almost 1.1 million by 2058. Dementia Australia’s services are supported by the Australian Government.

**National Dementia Helpline 1800 100 500**

**Interpreter service available**

(The National Dementia Helpline is an Australian Government Initiative)

**Dementia is a National Health Priority Area**

[www.dementia.org.au](http://www.dementia.org.au)

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**Spokespeople are available for media comment via Skype or phone.**

When talking or writing about dementia please refer to [Dementia-Friendly Language Guidelines](#).