



**Dementia  
Australia®**

# **Community Education Toolkit**

*Let's get thinking*

Host guide

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# Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Introduction .....                       | 1  |
| About Dementia Australia .....           | 1  |
| Who the toolkit is for .....             | 1  |
| How the toolkit works .....              | 1  |
| How to prepare for the session .....     | 2  |
| Skills required for facilitation .....   | 3  |
| Equipment needed.....                    | 3  |
| How to prepare for the presentation..... | 4  |
| How to introduce the toolkit.....        | 4  |
| Session plan .....                       | 5  |
| Part 1: Brain Health .....               | 5  |
| Part 2: About dementia.....              | 7  |
| Part 3: Staying Connected.....           | 9  |
| Further resources and links .....        | 10 |
| Feedback survey.....                     | 11 |
| Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) .....  | 12 |
| Appendix 1: Activity 2.1 – Quiz .....    | 14 |

## Introduction

The Community Education Toolkit is designed to help community group hosts deliver an engaging and informative session about healthy ageing and to learn more about dementia. The toolkit has been informed by a team of dementia specialists, consumers and community stakeholders.

This host guide is designed to ensure that your sessions are interactive, informative and supportive. Adjust the activities and discussions as needed to best fit the needs of your group. As host, your efforts play a vital role in empowering communities with knowledge, understanding and support, for individuals living with dementia and their carers.

## About Dementia Australia

Dementia Australia is the source of trusted information, education and services for the estimated 400,000 Australians living with dementia, and the more than 1.5 million people involved in their care. We advocate for positive change and support vital research. We are here to support people impacted by dementia, and to enable them to live as well as possible.

For more information, visit [Dementia Australia](#).

## Who the toolkit is for

The toolkit is for community groups across Australia. This includes social, sporting, recreational, retirement villages, local government and faith-based groups where people come together to share knowledge and ideas.

## How the toolkit works

The toolkit is a video-based resource that can be accessed [here](#), via the Dementia Australia website.

The toolkit is divided into three, 10-minute parts:

1. Brain Health
2. About Dementia
3. Staying Connected.

Each part features an interactive video narrated by comedian and Dementia Australia Ambassador, Geraldine Hickey, designed so you as a group host can adapt the session to suit the needs of your group. You can simply play the video, listen to our expert guest presenters and if you choose, extend the session with optional activities presented by Geraldine.

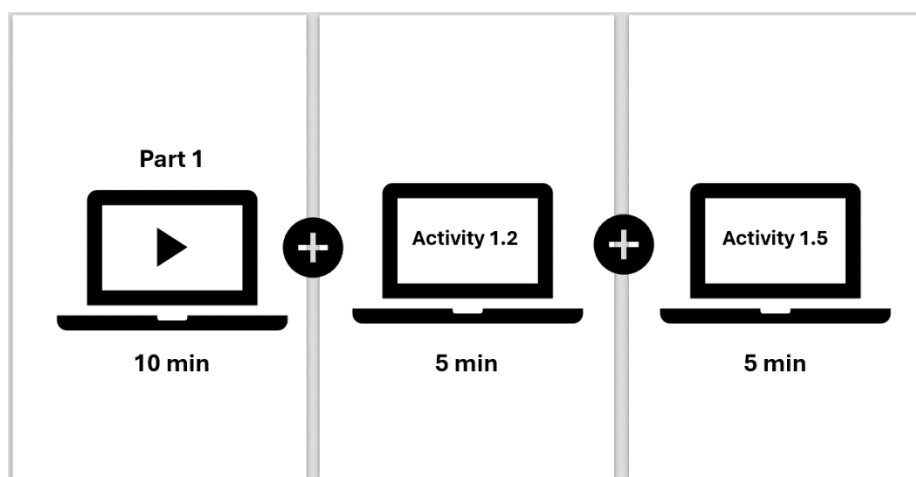
## How to prepare for the session

1. Preview the toolkit videos
2. Choose your topic/s

| ✓ | Part   | Topic             | Time required |
|---|--------|-------------------|---------------|
|   | Part 1 | Brain Health      | 10 minutes    |
|   | Part 2 | About Dementia    | 10 minutes    |
|   | Part 3 | Staying Connected | 10 minutes    |

3. You can extend each session by adding your choice of optional activities such as short discussions, video content and other activities. You can find these activities in the session plan below. The activities are numbered to make it easy to navigate within the interactive video. The activities enable time for group interaction and avoids interrupting the flow of presenter information.

**Example:** John's community group is focusing on health promotion this month. He has a 30-minute information session planned. As host, John chooses Part 1 (Brain Health) and opts for two optional activities of short group discussions. With the addition of an introduction and session evaluation, this fulfils his time allotment perfectly.



## Skills required for facilitation

Your role as a host is key in providing a safe and inclusive environment, fostering engaging discussions and navigating the content. You will need the following skills to lead the session:

- **Confidence:** Ability to lead group discussions and activities.
- **Technical skills:** Basic knowledge of setting up and using digital devices (for example, tablets and computers) and software applications.
- **Communication skills:** Ability to clearly convey information and instructions.
- **Time management:** Ability to manage time effectively to cover all planned content within the allocated timeframe.
- **Empathy and sensitivity:** Understanding and compassion for individuals impacted by dementia. Some people may find the content in the following videos upsetting or distressing: if this is the case you can ask if the person would like to take a break follow up after the session to check in and offer resources including the National Dementia Helpline 1800 100 500.
- **Limitations:** You are not expected to be an expert in relation to dementia. It's okay if you do not always know the answer to a question. You can refer to Frequently Asked Questions, page 15 of this guide or direct anyone with a dementia-specific question or issue to the National Dementia Helpline 1800 100 500.
- **If delivered online:** Experience in hosting an online group using the chat function to support group discussion and collaboration.

## Equipment needed

The session can be delivered both face-to-face or online depending on the needs of your group.

You will need:

- internet access
- digital device (best delivered via laptop or desktop)
- presentation display (projector/screen/television)
- speakers for sound (share audio if sharing your screen online)
- printed materials (Activity 2.1)
- writing materials (pens).

## How to prepare for the presentation

- **Familiarise yourself:** Before the session, review this guide and the presentation so that you're familiar with the material, interactive elements, timing and resources.
- **Test the technology:** Make sure that all digital tools and platforms (such as video conferencing hardware, internet connection, audio and so on) are functioning correctly. Troubleshoot any potential technical issues beforehand by testing audio and videostreaming.
- **Closed captions:** Closed captions can be enabled in the bottom right corner of the presentation screen if required for your group.
- **Create a welcoming environment:** Set up the space to be welcoming and distraction-free. Encourage participants to introduce themselves and share any expectations or concerns they may have regarding the session.

## How to introduce the toolkit

Let participants know that:

- You are not an expert.
- You are hosting this presentation using information materials provided by Dementia Australia.
- If they have any questions about dementia, they can contact the National Dementia Helpline directly on 1800 100 500 or [dementia.org.au/helpline](https://dementia.org.au/helpline).

## Acknowledgement of Country

You may like to begin your group session with Acknowledgement of Country. Here are some words that may guide you.

Spoken (general): "I'd like to begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet today. I would also like to pay my respects to Elders past and present and to our shared futures."

Spoken (specific, researching and saying the names of the words in italics): "I'd like to begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet today, the (*people*) of the (*nation*) and pay my respects to Elders past and present and to our shared futures."

Note: A specific Acknowledgement of Country is recommended where appropriate, as is it considered more respectful. For some areas where there are no specific or currently recognised custodians, it is more appropriate to give a general Acknowledgement.

# Session plan

## Part 1: Brain Health

| Overview  | Time required |
|---|---------------|
| Presented by Old Age Psychiatrist, Dr Terence Chong, this video talks about the health and lifestyle factors that impact our brain health and explores practical tips to keep your brain healthy to lower the risk of dementia. | 10 min        |

### Optional activities

These activities are optional and time-dependent. You can choose the activities that are most relevant for your group. Tick the activity you would like to deliver for your group.

| ✓ | No. | Type             | Description   | Time  |
|---|-----|------------------|---|-------|
|   | 1.1 | Group discussion | <p>Geraldine instructs the group to take a moment to think about their daily routine and asks the group: “What activities or habits do you engage in that you believe contribute to maintaining a healthy brain?”</p> <p>Then, Geraldine invites the group to share their ideas.</p> <p>As group host, you may need to repeat the question. Allow a few minutes for the group to reflect. You may like to ask a few people to share.</p> <p>Explain to the group that they will learn more about brain health strategies during the information session.</p> <p>Click ‘next’ to continue.</p> | 5 min |
|   | 1.2 | Group discussion | <p>Geraldine instructs the group to take a moment to “think about activities and ideas that help to support your positive emotional and mental health”.</p> <p>Then, Geraldine invites the group to share their ideas.</p> <p>As group host, you may need to repeat the question. Allow a few minutes for the group to reflect. You may like to ask for a couple of people to share.</p> <p>Answers will be revealed in the next video.</p> <p>Click ‘next’ to continue.</p>  | 5 min |



|  |     |                            |   |       |
|--|-----|----------------------------|---|-------|
|  | 1.3 | Mindful breathing exercise | <p>Play this short mindful activity video. Participants can sit, relax and listen to this simple activity to learn to calm breathing, reduce stress and anxiety.</p> <p>The group will be guided by video whilst seated. When completed, give the group a moment to reset before continuing.</p> <p>Press 'start' to commence.</p>  | 5 min |
|  | 1.4 | Group discussion           | <p>Geraldine instructs the group to take a moment to “think about some social activities you enjoy or new ideas you might like to try”.</p> <p>Then Geraldine invites the group to share their ideas.</p> <p>As group host, you may need to repeat the question. Allow a few minutes for the group to reflect. You may like to encourage a couple of people to share.</p> <p>Some answers will be revealed in the next video.</p> <p>Click 'next' to continue.</p>  | 5 min |
|  | 1.5 | Group discussion           | <p>Geraldine instructs the group to take a moment to “share some brain healthy lifestyle strategies or ways you have overcome some of these risk factors to make a positive lifestyle change”.</p> <p>Then, Geraldine invites the group to share their ideas.</p> <p>As group host, you may need to repeat the question. Allow a few minutes for the group to reflect. You may like to encourage a few people to share.</p> <p>See further resources below for more information about brain health strategies.</p> <p>Click 'next' to continue.</p> | 5 min |

### Further resources and links

- [BrainTrack](#) – learn more about ways to reduce your risk
- [Dementia Australia - CTE](#) – learn more about chronic traumatic encephalopathy.
- information and resources to inform policy discussions.

## Part 2: About dementia

| Overview  | Time required |
|---|---------------|
| <p>Presented by general practitioner and Dementia Australia Honorary Medical Advisor Dr Marita Long, this video talks about dementia, what it is, its signs and symptoms, and how it's diagnosed and treated. Dementia Advocate Bobby Redman shares her experience of being diagnosed with dementia. Find out who to contact for further support, including the National Dementia Helpline.</p> | <p>10 min</p> |

### Optional activities

| ✓ | No. | Type                               | Description  | Time  |
|---|-----|------------------------------------|--|-------|
|   | 2.1 | Quiz question activity - questions | <p><b>Note:</b> Print a copy (see appendix) of the quiz questions to hand out to each participant or send to online participants prior to the session.</p> <p>Geraldine explains (before we hear more about brain changes and dementia), to try and answer our true/false quiz questions.</p> <p>Q 1: Symptoms of dementia are not always memory related.</p> <p>Q 2: Dementia is a normal part of ageing.</p> <p>Q 3: Alzheimer's disease is one type of dementia.</p> <p>Q 4: Genetic-related dementia is common.</p> <p>Q 5: Treatment is available to delay progression of dementia.</p> <p>As group host, you may like to pause the video after each question and read aloud to the audience. Participants can listen throughout the session to check their answers.</p> <p>Click 'next' to continue.</p> | 5 min |

|  |     |                                  |  |       |
|--|-----|----------------------------------|--|-------|
|  | 2.2 | Group discussion                 | <p>Geraldine asks the question: “What do you think might be a sign or symptom of dementia?” Then, Geraldine invites the group to share their ideas.</p> <p>As group host, you may need to repeat the question. Allow a few minutes for the group to reflect. You may like to encourage a couple of people to share.</p> <p>The answers will be revealed in the next video.</p> <p>Click ‘next’ to continue.</p>  | 5 min |
|  | 2.3 | Quiz question activity - answers | <p>Geraldine asks the groups how they went in answering the quiz questions.</p> <p>As group host, discuss with the group if they were surprised by these answers.</p> <p>Q1: Symptoms of dementia are not always memory related. <b>True</b></p> <p>Q 2: Dementia is a normal part of ageing. <b>False</b></p> <p>Q3. Alzheimer’s disease is one type of dementia. <b>True</b></p> <p>Q 4: Genetic-related dementia is common. <b>False</b></p> <p>Q 5: Treatment is available to delay progression of dementia. <b>True</b></p> | 5 min |

### Further resources and links

- Printable [quiz question handout](#)
- [Dementia Australia website](#) – learn more about dementia
- [National dementia helpline](#) – access support
- [The Dementia Guide](#) – information about supports and services
- Learn more about [living with dementia](#)

## Part 3: Staying Connected

| Overview   | Time required |
|--|---------------|
| Presented by actor and Dementia Australia ambassador, Jess Redmayne, this video talks about how we can reduce the impact of stigma and discrimination for people with dementia with the right type of support. Bobby Redman, a Dementia Advocate, shares her experience of living with dementia and the importance of staying involved and feeling connected to her community. Learn how you can get involved and make your group more inclusive of people living with dementia. | 10 min        |

### Optional Activities

| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No. | Type  | Description   | Time     |
|-------------------------------------|-----|-------|---|----------|
|                                     | 3.1 | Video | <p>You may like to watch a short video presented by Dr Marita Long, who provides a brief overview about dementia.</p> <p>This is recommended if you are only presenting Part 3 of the Toolkit.</p> <p>Click 'next' to continue.</p>   | 5 min    |
|                                     | 3.2 | Video | <p>The unspoken impact of dementia.</p> <p>This is a powerful video of Glenda, Keith and Graeme sharing their experiences of living with dementia, the stigma that they've experienced because of their diagnosis and their views on the small things people can do to help create a dementia-friendly nation.</p> <p>Click 'next' to continue.</p> | 5 min    |
|                                     | 3.3 | Video | <p>A group in Adelaide is working with State Swim to create dementia-friendly swimming classes and resources to help get people living with dementia more connected with others, get active and have some fun.</p> <p>Click 'next' to continue.</p>   | 6.05 min |

|  |     |                  |  |   |
|--|-----|------------------|--|---|
|  | 3.4 | Video            | <p>Phil was diagnosed with younger onset Alzheimer’s disease at age 55. Phil is a busy and enthusiastic speaker as a Dementia Advocate for Dementia Australia and co-researcher on several dementia research projects. Listen to Phil’s experience with his assistance dog, Margot, who enables and empowers him to travel independently. A dementia-friendly future is a future that is better for everyone in the community.</p> <p>Click ‘next’ to continue.</p>  | 2 min   |
|  | 3.5 | Group discussion | <p>Take a moment to think of ways to make your group more inclusive of people living with dementia.</p> <p>Some other answers may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send reminders of dates and times.</li> <li>• Ensure spaces are dementia-friendly.</li> <li>• Use visual cues like name tags or photos.</li> <li>• Initiate a buddy system.</li> <li>• Provide roles within the group that focus on the person’s strengths.</li> <li>• Address transportation and accessibility needs.</li> <li>• Provide dementia awareness sessions for all members.</li> </ul> <p>Click ‘next’ to continue.</p> | <p>10-30 minutes</p> <p>Group host to determine time needed</p> |

## Further resources and links

- Learn more about [dementia-friendly communities](#)
- Dementia-friendly community [tools and resources](#)
- [Get involved](#) with Dementia Australia

## Feedback survey

Collect participant feedback which can help to identify areas for improvement and refine future sessions. Access the feedback survey by clicking [here](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CNR39S8) (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CNR39S8>).

# Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

If you have any questions about the Community Education Toolkit, you can contact us at [innovation@dementia.org.au](mailto:innovation@dementia.org.au).

1. **What lifestyle factors can help reduce the risk of dementia?** Adopting a healthy lifestyle that includes regular exercise, a balanced diet, social engagement, mental stimulation and managing cardiovascular risk factors like high blood pressure and diabetes may help reduce the risk of dementia.
2. **What is dementia?** Dementia is a brain condition. It's not a normal part of ageing. The effects of dementia vary, but generally dementia affects your mood, memory, thinking and behaviour. Dementia can happen to anybody, but it is more common after the age of 65.
3. **What are the early signs of dementia?** Early signs include memory loss, difficulty finding words, challenges in planning or problem-solving, confusion about time or place and changes in mood or personality. There are more details about early signs in Module 2 of this presentation.
4. **Is dementia a normal part of ageing?** No, dementia is not a normal part of ageing. While the risk of developing dementia increases with age, it's not an inevitable aspect of growing older.
5. **Can dementia be prevented?** While there is no guaranteed way to prevent dementia, adopting a healthy lifestyle, staying mentally and socially active, managing chronic conditions and staying physically active may help reduce the risk.
6. **What causes dementia?** Dementia can be caused by various diseases and conditions that damage brain cells. The most common cause is Alzheimer's disease, but other causes include vascular dementia, Lewy body dementia and frontotemporal disorders.
7. **Is there a difference between Alzheimer's disease and dementia?** Yes, Alzheimer's disease is just one type of dementia. In fact, there are more than 100 diseases that may cause dementia. Dementia is not one specific disease, rather, it's an umbrella term for a set of symptoms caused by physical disorders affecting the brain. Dementia and Alzheimer's disease are often confused because Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of dementia.
8. **How is dementia diagnosed?** Diagnosis involves a thorough medical evaluation, including medical history, physical examination, cognitive tests and possibly brain imaging or other tests to rule out other conditions.
9. **Is dementia hereditary?** Some forms of dementia have a genetic component, meaning they can run in families. However, having a family member with dementia doesn't mean that you'll develop it.
10. **Can dementia be treated?** While there's currently no cure for most types of dementia, some medications and interventions can help manage symptoms and improve quality of life, especially if started early.
11. **Are there any medications to slow down the progression of dementia?** Some medications may temporarily improve symptoms or slow down the progression of

certain types of dementia, such as Alzheimer's disease, but they don't stop the underlying disease process.

12. **Can dementia be reversed?** In some cases, dementia symptoms can be reversed if they're caused by treatable conditions such as vitamin deficiencies, thyroid problems, or medication side effects. However, most types of dementia are progressive and irreversible.
13. **How long can a person live with dementia?** The lifespan of a person with dementia varies depending on factors such as age, overall health, type of dementia, and level of care. On average, people live with dementia for several years after diagnosis, but this can range from a few years to decades.
14. **How can carers support someone with dementia?** Carers can provide practical assistance with daily tasks, create a safe and supportive environment, offer emotional support and companionship, and ensure access to medical care and social services.
15. **What resources are available for people with dementia and their families?** Dementia Australia provide various resources support groups, educational programs and counselling specialising in dementia care. You can find out more [here](#).
16. **What support is available for carers of people with dementia?** Carers can access support through respite care services, support groups, counselling, educational programs and community organisations specialising in dementia caregiving. It's important for carers to take care of their own physical and emotional wellbeing as well.



## Appendix 1: Activity 2.1 – Quiz

| Question  | True | False |
|---|------|-------|
| Q 1: Symptoms of dementia are not always memory-related.      |      |       |
| Q 2: Dementia is a normal part of ageing.                     |      |       |
| Q 3: Alzheimer’s disease is one type of dementia.             |      |       |
| Q 4: Genetic-related dementia is common.                      |      |       |
| Q 5: Treatment is available to delay progression of dementia. |      |       |

You can listen throughout the session to check your answers.