

# Making Your Business Dementia Friendly

There are many ways in which you may become dementia friendly.

Here are a some suggestions:

## Business Considerations:

- Conduct a dementia sensitive space review of the business environment
- Consider dementia friendly concepts when refurbishing the space or adding new facilities
- Be sure employees and support staff are trained in dementia friendly customer service practices
- Establish human resource policies for employees with memory impairment or those who are caring for a family member or loved one with dementia
- Appoint a trained staff member to take the lead on dementia related matters

## Environmental Suggestions:

### Floors:

- Furnishings contrast with walls for easy visibility
- Open walking space clear of obstacles and clutter
- Floor plan with simple, clear walking routes

### Avoid:

- Dark colored floor mats
- Carpets with bold patterns
- Highly reflective or slippery floor surface

### Lighting:

- Indirect lighting for reduced glare
- Avoid areas of dark shadow or bright glare
- Reflections from windows and mirrors can cause confusion and disorientation
- When seating a client with dementia, position them facing away from reflective surfaces, glare, or visual stimulation

### Signage:

- Simple signs with clear, essential information
- Use universal symbols when possible (ex: arrows)
- Signage should be displayed at eye level whenever possible
- Glass doors clearly marked
- Font on menus and signage is clear and large enough to read easily

### Restrooms:

- Family room or unisex toilet to allow for someone to have assistance
- Doors clearly marked with simple signage / symbols
- Color contrast toilet seats, handrails installed in stall

### Acoustics:

- Minimize loud, noisy environments. Sound absorbing materials are helpful.
- Provide a quiet seating area away from noisy kitchens, lobbies, or street noise
- Alarms, chimes and bells can cause anxiety and confusion

## Communication Strategies:

- Speak to the person with dementia, not the care partner, whenever possible
- Speak clearly and slowly

- Pay attention to your body language, tone, volume, pace of speech
- Use shorter sentences
- Avoid using jargon or slang phrases
- Use closed-ended questions / offer simple choices for answers
- Make eye contact
- Stay calm and listen carefully
- Be patient and flexible
- Avoid arguing or correcting

### **Employee Support Options:**

- Promote awareness of the 10 Warning Signs
- Host a “Dementia & Your Community” customer service training program
- Recognize and support employees who are also family caregivers by developing care policy guidelines and procedures
- Provide Alzheimer’s Association 24/7 Helpline 800.272..3900 for dementia support, resources and education

### **Resources:**

- Alzheimer’s Association MA / NH Chapter: 24/7 Helpline (800) 272-3900
- Boston Alzheimer’s Initiative: (617) 635-3992
- Dementia Friendly MA: <https://mcoaonline.com/programs/dementia-friendly/>
- Dementia Friends: <http://dementiafriendsusa.org/>
- Dementia Friendly America: [www.dfamerica.org](http://www.dfamerica.org)

