

Making Your Restaurant Dementia Friendly

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

Here are a some suggestions:

Customer Service Suggestions:

Reservations, Wait Times:

- A caller with dementia may need guidance when making a reservation
- Automated phone and online reservations may be confusing and frustrating
- Waiting area seating should be clearly visible in contrasting color from walls and floor
- Reduced wait times or quiet seating area will help reduce confusion, anxiety

Menu, Ordering:

- People with dementia may have difficulty making choices from menu
- May have difficulty choosing from extra menu options
- May have challenges focusing on wait staff review of menu specials, item options

Bills, Invoices, Gratuities:

- Changes in the brain make information processing difficult. People with dementia will likely have challenges understanding the bill, calculating a gratuity, or remembering to pay
- These brain changes will also make it difficult to determine the correct money calculation needed to pay.

Communication:

- 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

Environmental Considerations:

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

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

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

Resources:

- Alzheimer's Association MA / NH Chapter: 24/7 Helpline (800) 272-3900
- Dementia Friendly America www.dfamerica.org
- Boston Alzheimer's Initiative (617) 635-3992
- Dementia Friendly MA www.dfmassachusetts.org
- Dementia Friends USA www.dementiafriendsusa.org



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