Making Your Restaurant Dementia Friendly

There are many ways in which you may become dementia friendly. Here are 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](http://www.dfamerica.org)
- Boston Alzheimer’s Initiative (617) 635-3992
- Dementia Friendly MA [www.dfmassachusetts.org](http://www.dfmassachusetts.org)
- Dementia Friends USA [www.dementiafriendsusa.org](http://www.dementiafriendsusa.org)