



Dementia Friendly Emergency Shelters

Presented by: Sheila Greuel, MA, East Central
Illinois Area Agency on Aging (ECIAAA)
Community Liaison Consultant



The Elements of Dementia Friendly America

Dementia Friendly Communities and Dementia Friends

Community Effort

Dementia Friendly Communities

“Dementia Friendly America is a multi-sector collaborative on a mission to foster "dementia friendly" communities.”

Source: www.dfamerica.org/about-dfa-1

Individual Effort

Dementia Friends

“A Dementia Friend is someone who.. learns about what it's like to live with dementia and then turns that understanding into action. From telling friends about the Dementia Friends program to visiting someone who is living with dementia, every action counts. Anyone of any age can be a Dementia Friend – we all have a part to play in creating dementia friendly communities!”

Source: www.dfamerica.org/dementia-friends-usa/

What is A Dementia Friendly Community?

A dementia-friendly community is a city, town or village where people with dementia are understood, respected and supported.



What is Dementia?



“Dementia describes a **group of symptoms** affecting

- ▣ **memory,**
- ▣ **thinking** and
- ▣ **social abilities**

severely enough to interfere with daily functioning.”



10 Warning signs of Dementia

1. Memory loss that disrupts daily life
2. Challenges in planning or solving problems
3. Difficulty completing familiar tasks at home, at work, or at leisure:
4. Confusion with time or place
5. Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relations



10 Warning Signs of Dementia

Continued

6. New problems with words in speaking or writing
7. Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps
8. Decreased or poor judgment
9. Withdrawal from work or social activities
10. Changes in mood and personality



alzheimer's 
association



cdc.gov/aging

Source: alz.org/publichealth/indiancountry

It matters!

What is the impact of moving to a shelter for a person living with dementia?



Things To Know: Environmental Setting

- Create a quiet place with softer lighting
- Create a safe walking path clear of trip hazards
- Secure the perimeter of areas if possible
- Create a safe environment inside and outside for walking and sitting
- Have restrooms, eating areas, intake areas identified by pictured signs



Source: Alzheimer's Association Emergency Preparedness 2020

Things To Know: Shelter Staff



- May need to assist with eating and drinking
- May need to prompt to eat and drink-may not recognize hunger or thirst
- Encourage treating individuals living with dementia with dignity and respect
- Consider having LTC staff as part of your Shelter Response Team
- Additional professional support is always available by calling the Alzheimer's Association 24.7 Helpline
- The Helpline offers conversation with a professionals to receive real-time tips and support on how to help the person with dementia

Alzheimer's 24/7 Helpline 800-272-3900



Communication Tips:

- Treat the person with dignity and respect
- Be aware of your feelings
- Be patient and supportive
- Offer comfort and reassurance
- Avoid criticizing or correcting
- Avoid arguing
- Offer a guess
- Encourage nonverbal communication
- Break tasks down into simple parts
- Mood is more important than content
- Speak slowly and clearly
- Use a gentle and relaxed tone
- Use preferred name
- Be on eye level with the person
- Use short, simple phrases and repeat information as needed
- Ask one question at a time
- Be patient
- Come from the front with good eye contact



(Source Alzheimer's Association
Communication Tip Sheet)

Behavior is a Form of Nonverbal Communication



Attempt to Identify the Root Cause of the Behavior

- ✓ Pain
- ✓ Hunger
- ✓ Fear
- ✓ Depression
- ✓ Frustration
- ✓ Loneliness, Helplessness, Boredom
- ✓ Hallucinations
- ✓ Overstimulation
- ✓ Changes in environment or routine
- ✓ Difficulty expressing thoughts or feelings
- ✓ Unfamiliarity with PPE
- ✓ Difficulty understanding the environment

Source: Alzheimer's Association
Emergency Preparedness 2020



Response to Challenging Behaviors

- Check your communication techniques
- Address if possible the source of discomfort
- Validate their emotions by focusing on the feelings
- Understand they may be expressing thoughts and feelings from their own reality. They may be reacting from past event.
- Offer reassurance and understanding



Source: Alzheimer's Association Emergency Preparedness 2020

Response to Challenging Behaviors

Continued

- Attempt to redirect them by:
 - Taking a walk
 - Practicing deep breathing with them
 - Provide a warm blanket or a cool cloth for their neck or forehead
 - Playing familiar music for them
 - Engage them with a pet or therapy device
- **Never physically force the person to do something**



Source: Alzheimer's Association Emergency Preparedness 2020

Awareness and Knowledge Can Change Chaos → Calmness in the Storm



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Thank You!

Elizabeth Hagemann,
Senior Manager, Education & Community Volunteers
Alzheimer's Association Illinois Chapter
207 S. Prospect Rd, Suite 1
Bloomington, IL 61704
direct line: 309.319.7220 fax: 309.664.0495

ehagemann@alz.org

www.alz.org/illinois

Toll-free 24/7 Helpline 1.800.272.3900



Contact Information

Sheila M. Greuel, MA
ECIAAA Community Liaison Consultant
2921 Walnut Ave.
Mattoon, IL 61938

eciaaacomunity@gmail.com

217 725-6081

