

6.3.1 DEMENTIA SUPPORT GROUP FACILITATION GUIDE

Companion Resource to Tool 6.4 Dementia Support Group Toolkit

PURPOSE

This guide complements the Tool 6.3 Dementia Support Group Toolkit by providing facilitators with practical guidance, discussion prompts, sample agendas, facilitation tips, and resources to support meaningful conversations.

SAMPLE MEETING FORMAT (60–90 MINUTES)

1. Welcome and Check-In (10–15 minutes)
2. Topic Discussion (30–40 minutes)
3. Resource Sharing (10–15 minutes)
4. Closing Reflection and Next Steps (5–10 minutes)

OPENING QUESTIONS

What is one success you experienced this week?

What has been your biggest challenge?

What support would be most helpful today?

What is one thing that helped you cope this week?

DISCUSSION TOPICS AND CONVERSATION STARTERS

UNDERSTANDING DEMENTIA

When did you first notice changes in your loved one?

What has surprised you most about the dementia journey?

COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

What communication approaches have worked well?

What situations are most challenging?

MANAGING STRESS AND SELF-CARE

How do you take care of yourself as a caregiver?

What support do you wish you had?

BEHAVIOR CHANGES

What behaviors have been most difficult?

What strategies have helped?

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

What conversations have been difficult to have?

What resources have been helpful?

FACILITATION TIPS

Encourage participation but do not require sharing.

Allow everyone an opportunity to speak.

Use active listening and validate emotions.

Redirect conversations respectfully when needed.

Avoid providing medical, legal, or financial advice.

Maintain confidentiality.

12-MONTH TOPIC CALENDAR

Month	Topic
January	Understanding Dementia
February	Communication Strategies
March	Managing Stress
April	Caregiver Self-Care
May	Community Resources
June	Behavior Changes
July	Meaningful Activities
August	Safety & Home Environment
September	Planning for the Future
October	Caregiver Resilience
November	Navigating the Holidays
December	Reflection and Successes

6.3.1 DEMENTIA SUPPORT GROUP FACILITATOR CHECKLIST

Use this checklist before, during, and after each dementia support group session.

- ☐ Confirm date, time, and location/virtual link
- ☐ Send reminder to participants
- ☐ Prepare discussion topic or prompt (if planned)
- ☐ Arrange seating to promote open conversation
- ☐ Prepare sign-in sheet
- ☐ Review ground rules
- ☐ Bring resource materials or referral information
- ☐ Plan opening and closing reflection
- ☐ Follow up with members who miss sessions (if appropriate)

SUGGESTED ONLINE RESOURCES FOR FACILITATORS

ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION

- [Caregiver Support](#)
- [Education & Resources](#)

DAKOTA AT HOME

- [South Dakota Caregiver Education & Resources](#)
- [Resource Directory](#)

FAMILY CAREGIVER ALLIANCE

- [Caregiver Resources & Education](#)

NATIONAL INSTITUTE ON AGING

- [Caregiver Resources](#)