

COMPONENT 7:

Dementia-Friendly Community Practices Guide

Purpose

Dementia-friendly initiatives completed through this component should be promoted through **Component 3** communication and awareness activities. Communities are encouraged to use **Component 8** tools to track progress, document accomplishments, evaluate outcomes, and support long-term sustainability of dementia-friendly practices.

Why It Matters

Individuals living with dementia may experience challenges navigating public spaces, accessing services, participating in community activities, and remain engaged in community life. Dementia-friendly practices help reduce confusion, promote independence, increase inclusion, and improve quality of life for individuals living with dementia and their caregivers.

Expected Outcomes

- Increase community awareness of dementia
- Improve accessibility and navigation in community settings
- Identify environmental barriers and opportunities for improvement
- Promote dementia-friendly practices among community organizations
- Increase participation and inclusion of individuals living with dementia and caregivers
- Strengthen community support systems

Key Actions

- Provide Dementia Awareness Training
- Improve Accessibility and Navigation

Estimated Time to Complete

Ongoing throughout implementation. Dementia-friendly practices should continue throughout Healthy Brain Community efforts and evolve based on community needs.

Who to Involve

Individuals Living with Dementia • Family Caregivers • Healthcare Providers • Public Health Professionals • Aging Services Organizations • Libraries • Faith Communities • Businesses • Community Centers • Recreation Facilities • Senior Centers • EMS • First Responders • Local Government • Volunteer Organizations • Tribal Partners

Tools Included in this Component

Tool Number	Tool Name
7.1	Education & Resources (Components 3, 4, and 5)
7.2	Dementia-Friendly Environmental Checklist
7.3	Environmental Scan Template
7.4	Dementia Friendly Event Planning Checklist
7.5	Event Planning Template

Step 1: Build Dementia Awareness

Purpose: Increase understanding of dementia and reduce stigma within the community.

Tools to Use: Tool 7.1 Education & Resources; 3.1 Communication Template 3.2 Outreach Calendar 3.3 Brain Health Messaging 3.4 Community Event Checklist 3.5 Community Awareness Activity Ideas; 4.2 Brain Health Education 4.3 Brain Health Infographics 4.6 Brain Health Resources; 5.3 Dementia Awareness Infographics 5.4 Dementia Awareness Education & Resources

Recommendations for Success:

- Use dementia awareness resources from Component 5: Dementia Awareness & Early Recognition.
- Use outreach and communication materials from Component 3: Community Engagement & Awareness.
- Use brain health education resources from Component 4: Brain Health Education & Risk Reduction.
- Promote awareness through presentations, events, and outreach activities.
- Share information about local resources and support services.

Step 2: Assess Community Spaces

Purpose: Identify strengths and opportunities for improvement within community environments.

Tool to Use: Tool 7.2 Dementia-Friendly Environmental Checklist

Recommendations for Success:

- Assess signage, lighting, accessibility, navigation, and environmental supports.
- Include a variety of community settings.
- Engage individuals with lived experience whenever possible.
- Focus on practical and achievable improvements.

Step 3: Complete an Environmental Scan

Purpose: Document observations and identify priority improvements.

Tool to Use: Tool 7.3 Environmental Scan Template

Recommendations for Success:

- Document strengths and barriers identified during assessments.
- Identify realistic opportunities for improvement.
- Discuss findings with community partners.
- Prioritize actions that can have meaningful impact.

Step 4: Plan Dementia-Friendly Activities

Purpose: Increase awareness, education, and community engagement.

Tools to Use: Tool 7.4 Event Planning Checklist and Tool 7.5 Event Planning Template

Recommendations for Success:

- Offer educational presentations and awareness events.
- Include individuals living with dementia and caregivers when possible.
- Partner with local organizations.
- Promote events through multiple communication channels.

Step 5: Implement Dementia-Friendly Practices

Purpose: Put assessment findings into action.

Recommendations for Success:

- Start with small, achievable improvements.
- Improve signage, lighting, navigation, and accessibility where appropriate.
- Provide dementia awareness education for staff and volunteers.
- Promote inclusion and participation in community activities.

Step 6: Share Successes and Expand Efforts

Purpose: Recognize accomplishments and encourage continued participation.

Recommendations for Success:

- Share success stories and lessons learned.
- Recognize community champions and partners.
- Encourage additional organizations to participate.
- Celebrate progress and continue building momentum.

Tips for Success

- Start with small, achievable improvements.
- Focus on practical changes that improve accessibility and inclusion.
- Engage a variety of community sectors.

- Include caregivers and individuals living with dementia whenever possible.
- Recognize and celebrate progress.

Component Completion Checklist

- ☐ Reviewed dementia education resources
- ☐ Completed an environmental assessment
- ☐ Completed an environmental scan
- ☐ Identified opportunities for improvement
- ☐ Conducted at least one awareness or education activity
- ☐ Implemented at least one dementia-friendly improvement
- ☐ Engaged community partners
- ☐ Shared progress with the community

Suggested Resources (Component 9)

- ADRD State Plan
- Dementia Friendly America
- CDC Healthy Brain Initiative Road Map
- South Dakota Alzheimer's Association
- University of South Carolina Office for the Study of Aging

Next Steps

After completing this component, communities may continue with Component 8: Planning, Evaluation, and Sustainability. Information and lessons learned from this component can support future implementation, evaluation, and long-term community improvement efforts.