Welcome to Dementia Friends USA

History of Dementia Friends

Dementia Friends is an international public awareness initiative delivered through volunteers and an online tool. Dementia Friends began in the United Kingdom and is run by Alzheimer’s Society. It is one strand of the Alzheimer’s Society’s work to create Dementia-Friendly communities.

Launched in February 2013, after only two years, Dementia Friends became one of the biggest ever social movements on any disease. In December 2015 it reached 1.4 million Dementia Friends, and the next target is 4 million Dementia Friends by 2020!

People with dementia sometimes need a helping hand to go about their daily lives and feel included in their local community. To provide this helping hand, Dementia Friends aims to give people an understanding of dementia and the small things that they can do to make a difference. From helping someone to find the right bus, to spreading the word about dementia on social media - every action counts!

The Dementia Friends program focuses on five key messages that we believe everyone should know about dementia:

- Dementia is not a natural part of aging.
- Dementia is caused by diseases of the brain.
- It is not just about losing your memory.
- It's possible to live well with dementia.
- There is more to the person than the dementia.

To become a Dementia Friend, a person needs to understand these five key messages and then commit to at least one dementia-friendly action.

How does it work?

The Dementia Friends program is delivered in different ways:

Face-to-face

Dementia Friends Champions deliver 45-60 minute Information Sessions to raise awareness of dementia
in their community. The sessions include the five key messages, and activities to raise people’s understanding. At the end of the session the Champion suggests some dementia friendly actions (such as being more patient or visiting someone they know living with dementia) and asks each person to commit to a personal action. This option is available when there is a state sub-license agreement in place.

**Online**

Alternatively, an individual may choose to become a friend online by viewing a series of online videos. Through the videos they learn about what it’s like to live with dementia and then commit to turning that understanding into action. Online Dementia Friends can be found on the Dementia Friends USA website: [http://www.dementiafriendsusa.org/](http://www.dementiafriendsusa.org/).

**Creating your State Dementia Friends Program**

The organization serving as the state administrator of the Dementia Friends program appoints a Master Champion. The Master Champion is responsible for “self-training” as a Dementia Friends Champion using the materials provided by Dementia Friends USA. The Master Champion will develop an approach to train additional Champions statewide. These Champions will be equipped to offer in-person Dementia Friends sessions. Training Dementia Friends Champions can be done in-person, via virtual meeting, etc. As required in the sublicense, a Dementia Friends sub-licensee must have statewide reach, whether through its organizational structure or through partnership.

Dementia Friends sub-licensees adhere to the Dementia Friends curriculum and model, while developing an implementation plan that meets the unique needs of within their state and local communities. Dementia Friends materials may also not be placed in the public domain. Materials must be branded in accordance with the Dementia Friends style guide.

**What makes a Dementia Friends program?**

We understand that each state’s implementation approach to Dementia Friends be unique it is important that the following principles are followed to ensure consistency of Dementia Friends nationally.

- Dementia Friends Information Sessions should last approximately 45 -60 minutes,
- The Information Session is a session which raises peoples’ understanding of dementia and challenges stigma. It is not formal training on dementia - after attending the session people will not be qualified or certified in dementia care.
- Dementia Friends sessions encourage turning individual’s understanding into action.
- Dementia Friends sessions highlight the five key messages on dementia:
  - Dementia is not a normal part of aging. Not everyone who grows old will develop dementia.
  - Dementia is caused by diseases of the brain. The most common is Alzheimer’s.
  - Dementia is not just about having memory problems. It can affect thinking, communication and doing everyday tasks.
  - It is possible to have a good quality of life with dementia.
  - There’s more to the person than the dementia. People with dementia are a valuable part of the community.
The session plan below must be followed. Contact the Dementia Friends USA team: info@dementiafriendsusa.org if you have a proposed change to curriculum.

**Session Overview**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time (Minutes)</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Welcome</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>One Word on Dementia</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>What is Dementia Friends?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Normal Aging vs. Alzheimer’s</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>10 Early Signs and Symptoms</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Broken Sentences Worksheet and Five Key Messages</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bookcase Story</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Everyday Tasks</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Review the Five Key Messages</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Turn Your Understanding into Action</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Resources in Your Community/Conclusion</td>
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**Overall Time: 45-60**

**Reporting Dementia Friends Numbers**

Per the sublicensure agreement, you are required to report the number of Dementia Friends in your state. By the 15th of each month, you will be asked to report monthly and cumulative numbers through this online survey link: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/DFUSA. You only need to track those who attend an in-person session as the Dementia Friends USA website tracks all those who attend and online session. Contact info@dementiafriendsusa.org with any questions.

**Your Program Information on the Dementia Friends USA Website**

We will include your Dementia Friends program contact information in the Directory of State Dementia Friends Programs on our website: http://dementiafriendsusa.org/sessions-your-state. Please submit your contact information, including the name and email of the primary contact along with a website (if applicable).

**Collaborating with Dementia Friends Programs in other States**

We encourage you to connect with those leading Dementia Friends programs in other states and be a resource for each other. While Dementia Friends USA staff will offer support in tracking numbers of friends and answering questions related to meeting the requirements of the sublicense agreements, support related to program implementation, Champion training and curriculum delivery will come through collaborating with program leads in other states.