



Dementia Care Guide for Family Members

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In 2019 the Management Team undertook a Dublin City University Level 8 course in Person Centred Dementia Care. This accredited qualification now recognises Homecare Solutions as a Dementia Champion of Care in our community. In 2021 we worked with Skillsnet and helped to develop a Certificate in Person Centred Dementia Care for carers working in a home setting with QQI accreditation. We partnered with The Waterfall Clinic to develop an exercise regime helping to maintain the clients independence at home. Exercise is one of the best ways to reduce the risk of Dementia according to Prof Shane O'Mara of TCD. At Homecare Solutions, we are trained and experienced to deliver a Person Centred Dementia Care Programme and provide an alternative to a residential care home for your loved one.

Homecare Solutions are experts in care of the elderly. Research shows by remaining in your home or a familiar surrounding with a regular routine, a trained professional delivering your care, a person with Dementia will maintain their independence for a longer period of time. The rate of progression can be greatly influenced by health and the physical and social environment. We are passionate about supporting and helping families live a full and well life with their Dementia diagnosis in the comfort of their own home and community. This guide is aimed at supporting and helping families understand this condition, and cope with the challenges they can face on their Dementia journey.

Ciara Conneely *Nuala Mahon*

Co-Founders

What is Dementia?



Dementia is the umbrella term which describes a number of conditions that cause damage to brain cells. Alzheimer's disease is the most common but there are many different types – over a hundred in fact. They include Frontal Temporal, Lewy Body, Vascular, any many more.

Dementia is a progressive, degenerative disease of the brain. How quickly Dementia progresses depends entirely on the individual. Dementia is a term used to describe a range of cognitive and behavioural symptoms that can include memory loss, problems with reasoning and communication, changes in personality and a reduction in a person's ability to carry out daily activities such as washing, dressing, cooking.

10 Early Warning Signs:

1. Memory Loss affecting daily life
2. Inability to plan and resolve problems
3. Reduced ability to complete familiar tasks
4. Confusion in time or place
5. Difficulty with spatial relationships
6. New problems with words/writing
7. Misplacing items or reduced ability to retrace steps
8. Impaired judgement
9. Social withdrawal
10. Changes in mood and personality

Communication – Key Points

- People with Dementia may have difficulties with expressive language and comprehension – this can be very frustrating for carers and people living with Dementia
- Important to look for the emotion behind the words
- Only a small portion of how we communicate is verbal, use other methods
- The responsibility for person centred communication lies with the carer
- People living with Dementia respond to emotion, even if unable to understand words – Validate the Emotion
- Ensure the person has aids e.g. hearing aids, glasses
- Ask questions in ways that don't require complex answers

Get the M.E.S.S.A.G.E

- M** *Maximise Attention* Attract attention, Avoid distraction, One topic at a time
- E** *Watch your Expression* and body language, show interest, remain relaxed and calm
- S** Keep it *SIMPLE*
Short, simple, familiar, clear choices
- S** *Support the Conversation*
Give time, Find the word, Repeat then rephrase, Reminders of the topic
- A** *Assist with visual aids*
Gestures and actions, objects and pictures
- G** *Get the message*
Listen, watch and work out behaviour and non verbal messages
- E** *Encourage and Engage in Conversation*
Interesting and familiar topics (reference 'Getting to Know Me' document)
Opportunities to talk

We are trained and experienced to deliver a 'Person Centred Dementia Care Programme' and provide the alternative to a residential care home for your loved one.



Living Well with Dementia

Post Diagnostic supports: Five Strands Approach

- 1 *Understanding and planning* – Information about progression and advice on changing needs, future planning
- 2 *Staying Connected* – Staying socially active
- 3 *Staying Healthy* – Diet, Exercise
- 4 *Supporting Cognition* – memory technology, challenging the brain
- 5 *Supporting Emotional Wellbeing* – managing stress, low mood

Creating opportunities for meaningful activity

Activities need to be person centred and meaningful to the person

- Use the getting to know me document to understand likes, dislikes, routine, the life story of the person living with Dementia, their family and their childhood memories
- Photographs, books, magazines, games, puzzles, companionship, going for a walk
- Music, Radio, TV, Exercises, Art, chores. Keep it simple and adapt to the capability of the person
- Practical activities such as baking or gardening
- Socialisation during activities

Home Environment

For a person living with Dementia, the home can pose difficulties and sometimes risks. Some simpler adaptations can make it safer for everyone. Bear in mind that Dementia is progressive its important to reassess the home and physical environment regularly. Our expert team will help and guide you and will provide you with useful recommendations.

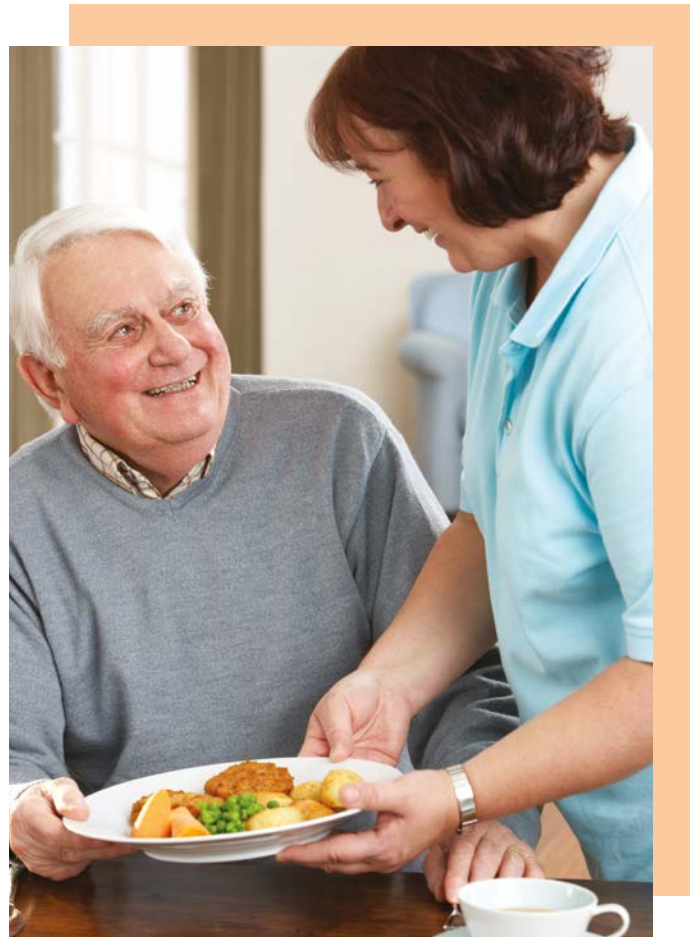
Some of the suggestions are as simple as reducing clutter, keeping a calendar up to date and visible, using a whiteboard noting the time and day of the week or leaving out clothes in the correct order for dressing. You could consider making adaptations to your home like adding stair or bathroom rails, changing the lighting or removing trip hazards both inside and outside. It can be helpful to put clearly written labels or instructions on doors, presses or household objects. For further supports and details about Memory Clinics, please refer to www.understandingtogether.ie



The benefits of Using 'Getting to Know Me'

We use "Getting to Know Me" with every client we have. We seek to understand our clients and their history so we can choose the right carer and help create a meaningful connection between our clients and carers.

- It enables us to support the person with what they actually want and need, rather than guessing.
- It allows us look for the person behind the illness and helps us have a better understanding of the causes of someone's behaviour or distress
- It allows us to support the person to engage in activities that are of interest and are meaningful to them. A person may have advanced dementia but is still able to engage to some extent in something that has held great interest for them. Dementia changes a person's ability to interact with their environment, but the person is still there.
- It enables us to build relationships based upon understanding and empathy
- It can provide the basis of assessment of risk and risk enablement across a range of situations and knowing what is important to the person.



Summary

- Dementia does not always lead to disability, what part do we play ?
- Beware of assumptions and perceptions
- Remember to look for the person behind the illness. Focus on strengths
- It is possible to live well with Dementia with the correct supports and education
- The responsibility to adapt is with the carer, people with Dementia cannot adapt to us.

Signposts to supports as necessary

Below are some details on each of the services that we have gathered for the benefit of our clients and their families. This is not an exhaustive list but will help with initial support from your community. As a homecare provider we are looking to enhance our community engagement with local support groups for people with Dementia.

Local Health Office

Services: Information and Advice (Homecare Packages, Home Help Services)

Location: HSE Oak House, Millennium Park, Naas

Phone: 045 880 400

Email:
homecarepackageskww@hse.ie

Family Carer Training Kildare

Services: Dementia Family Carer Programmes, Information and advice, Activities and Groups.

Location: Co. Kildare

Phone: 1800 341 341

Naas Active Retirement Association

Services: Activities & Group Outings

Location: McCauley Place, Naas

Phone: 085 877 7619
(Ina McCarthy)

Email:
Ina.mccarthy@gmail.com

Alzheimer Café

Services: Activities and Groups

Location: McAuley Place, Naas

Phone: 087 605 7264

Psychiatry of Later Life Kildare / West Wicklow

Services: Information and Advice (Diagnosis & Clinical Care)

Location: Sarto House, Sarto Road, Naas

Phone: 045/887002

Newbridge Social Club

Services: Dementia Social Club, Awareness, Information and Advice, Activities and Groups

Location: Newbridge Parish Centre, Station Road, Newbridge

Phone: 086 145 0663

The Waterfall Physiotherapy Clinic

Services: Group Exercise Class, Falls Prevention and Balance Rehabilitation

Location: Claregate St, Kildare Town

Phone: 045 535 344

Web: www.thewaterfallclinic.ie

Past Times Community Choir

Services: Dementia friendly choir

Location: McAuley Place, Sallins Road, Naas, Co. Kildare.

Phone: 045 448 316
and 083 170 9589

Sister Rice Drop in Centre

Services: Dementia carer Support Group, Activities and Groups

Location: Clane Centre, Ballingappa Road, Clane, Co. Kildare

Phone No: 086 607 4089

About Homecare Solutions



Homecare Solutions was established in 2007. We are an owner managed, independent, non-medical homecare provider based in Naas, serving the Kildare, West Wicklow and greater Dublin areas. Homecare Solutions will provide you with hours of support for your family based on their needs. We provide experienced, trained carers to look after your family member in the comfort of their own home.

Our Mission is to provide compassionate *Person-Centred Care* to all our clients and their families by our Nurse led Team. We take the time to listen and to understand each individual's care needs. Our aim is to provide personalised home care that puts the needs, interests and wishes of our clients at the heart of everything we do.

We work with



Contact Us



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