**Dementia Awareness- Level 1**

In the UK there are 800,000 people living with Dementia.

**What is Dementia?**

The word dementia describes a set of symptoms that include memory loss and difficulties with thinking, problem solving or language.

A person with dementia may also experience changes in their mood or behaviour. There are many types of dementia. The most common are Alzheimer’s dementia and vascular dementia.

Dementia is caused by diseases of the brain- it’s not an inevitable part of ageing, as many people believe. The symptoms will gradually get worse as it progresses and there is no cure. No two people experience dementia in the same way- it effects everyone differently.

Dementia mainly affects people over the age of 65 but younger people may also develop dementia- there are at least 17,000 people in the UK who developed dementia before they were 65. The real number may be up to three times higher.

**How Do I Know If Someone Has Dementia?**

There are no obvious physical signs that show someone has dementia. Another difficulty is that more than half of people with dementia have not received a diagnosis.

The common symptoms of dementia such as memory loss, confusion, problems with expression, thinking and reasoning might affect the actions of somebody with dementia or the way in which they interact with people.

**How Does Dementia Affect People?**

Every person with Dementia is different and an individual with their own personality. So every

person’s journey with

Dementia will be individual to them.

Some of the ways Dementia can affect people include:

* **Memory**–this particularly affects day to day memory.Some people remember things from a long time ago much more easily

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* **Communication Problems**–including finding the rightwords for things. People might also struggle to follow a conversation or express their needs.

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* **Difficulties with thinking things through and planning**–problems with carrying out everydaytasks such as handling money, cooking.

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* **Confusion about time or place**–not recognising orgetting lost in familiar places or being unaware of time and date.

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* **Sight and Vision Problems**–increased difficulty withreading and judging distances or mistaking shiny, patterned objects or reflections.

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* **Unusual emotional behaviour or responses** -becoming sad, angry, frightened or upset. Someone may seem to lack self-confidence or display changes in mood.

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* **Restlessness or disorientation** –in unfamiliar or noisyenvironments people with dementia may become confused or ill at ease.

**How can you support someone with Dementia?**

* Firstly, allow the patient to take their time

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* Be Friendly and Smile

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* Communicate clearly- make eye contact, make sure your body language matches what you are saying, speak clearly and calmly, use short and simple sentences, speak slowly,

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* Be aware of the environment– objects that are shiny, patterned or reflective can cause people with dementia to mistake what they are seeing;

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* Show someone how to do something rather than give instruction

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* Try not to put the person under too much pressure; break down tasks into smaller tasks

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* If someone forgets what you have said; repeat your sentence patiently as if you have not said it before

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* Provide a quiet environment with good lighting.

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* Provide step by step explanation of tasks that you need to perform on your patient

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* Provide stimulation and activity where possible

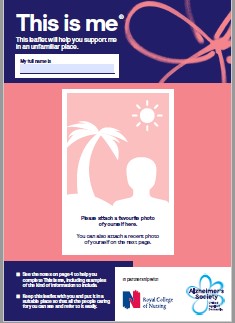
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* Try to understand and acknowledge your patients reality, how old do they think they are, at what stage are they in their reality/life

* **This Is me booklet –** is a simple and practical tool thatpeople with dementia can use to tell staff about

their needs, preferences, likes, dislikes and

interests.



Patients admitted from a residential home or care home should arrive with a ‘Red Bag’ as part of the Red Bag Scheme. Please check inside for a copy of their ‘This is me’ document.

Blank copies of the ‘This is me’ document are available in the ward and departmental areas for people with a diagnosis of dementia who do not already have a copy.



The Butterfly Scheme is a nationally recognised opt-in scheme, which the Trust has signed up to, for people with memory impairment. They may have a dementia diagnosis, a delirium or perhaps simply seem to have some confusion. If there’s a carer available to support the person in opting in, they will be involved, but the opt-in decision is a personalised process and available even to those who have no carer.

When someone has opted in, a discreet Butterfly\* symbol will be placed nearby, usually on the wall above the bed and by the patient’s name.

Blue Butterfly for those who have a diagnosis of Dementia



Outline of a Butterfly for those with a memory impairment



This symbol is that patient’s request for ALL staff to follow a specific care response - the REACH© response:

***R*emind**the patient what has led to this moment and eachtime a member of staff approaches, gently remind the patient of what’s going on.

***E*xplain**what is about to happen so the patient is prepared(e.g. blood pressure, examination) so that they aren’t taken by surprise.

***A*rrange**the bedside area to make sense, withpossessions, drinks and so on easily accessible and replaced where they were originally found.

***C*heck**well-being, cleanliness, drinking and hydration,which may become more difficult to maintain independently when the patient is away from home, will be given special attention.

***H*istory**must always be checked and verified via records orcarer; the patient will not be relied upon to provide accurate medical history, but will still be asked courteously about it – and instructions will be supported.

# John’s Campaign

Hospital admissions can be difficult experiences for people with dementia or frailty. The aim of John’s Campaign is to give carers of those living with dementia the right to stay with them in hospital, if they so wish.

The Trust is signed up because it values the expertise carers can share with us and we recognise the key role they have in helping us to plan and deliver person centred, safe, effective care.

Relatives and carers will be welcomed and encouraged to be involved in every point of care in the patient’s journey.

This could include:

* Explaining treatments and interventions
* Completing the ‘This is me’ document
* Helping with washing, dressing and eating
* Hold their hand while they settle for the night. We will try our best to accommodate carers who request to stay overnight but unfortunately facilities are limited.





Useful contacts and resources:

# The Carers Lounge

Bedford Hospital, South Wing (follow the signs to the Committee Room).

Open Monday — Friday, 11am — 6pm.

Saturday & Sunday—by appointment only

Website: [www.carersinbeds.org.uk](http://www.carersinbeds.org.uk/)

The Carers Lounge offer help, support and information for carers of any age. Please feel free to drop in and see them, no appointment (please see above) or referral needed.

# Tibbs Dementia Foundation

We know that it is possible to live well and have a better experience with dementia - and our services can help you to do this.

Tel: 07795177948

Website: [www.tibbsdementia.co.uk](http://www.tibbsdementia.co.uk/)

# Patient Advice and Liaison Service

Bedford Hospital, South Wing (on the main

hospital corridor, opposite the Faith and Belief room)

Tel: 01234 795814

# Alzheimer’s society

The Alzheimer’s website has lots of information on dementia and many factsheets with information regarding all aspects of dementia e.g. diagnosis, the effects of the disease, behaviour, support available, practical advice and details of the nearest branch.

Website: www.alzheimers.org.uk

# Checklist

*Have you……*

*Read all of the guidance? Yes/No*

*Checked that you have read*, *understood and are able to apply in your role? Yes/No*

Please read this guidance document and confirm your understanding by completing the return slip and returning this to your site specific training department for us to update your ESR records.

Alternatively, you can email your completed form to:

**Bedford:** [educationcentrebookings@bedfordhospital.nhs.uk](mailto:educationcentrebookings@bedfordhospital.nhs.uk)

**Luton:** [trainingbookings@ldh.nhs.uk](mailto:trainingbookings@ldh.nhs.uk)

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| --- | --- |
| Full Name (please Print) |  |
| Signature |  |
| Topic | Dementia Awareness Tier 1 |
| Date |  |
| Ward/Department |  |