

# Dementia Learning Guide 2022

**Centre for Dementia Learning**



## About Dementia Australia

Dementia Australia is the source of trusted information, education and services for the estimated half a million Australians living with dementia, and the almost 1.6 million people involved in their care. We advocate for positive change and support vital research. We are here to support people impacted by dementia, and to enable them to live as well as possible.

## Centre for Dementia Learning

Dementia Australia's Centre for Dementia Learning is a leading national provider of professional dementia education. We offer a wide range of services to organisations that provide services to or engage with people living with dementia.

We are proud to be part of Dementia Training Australia, providing a comprehensive suite of high-quality dementia education across Australia.

Centre for Dementia Learning brings a person-centred approach to dementia education, informed by the lived experience of people impacted by dementia and the latest research and contemporary practices.

We are a recognised leader in dementia education both locally and internationally, receiving multiple awards for our innovative use of technology to improve learning outcomes.

Our Communities of Practice program won the **Service Transformation category** at the **2021 Future of Ageing Awards** for our work helping aged care staff implement change and transform dementia care.

Our team were also finalists in the **2021 HESTA Excellence Awards** for **Team Excellence in Aged Care**, recognising our outstanding work reimagining the centre's education and consultancy programs during the global pandemic.



“

If you get it right for people living with dementia, you get it right for everyone else. ”

- Person living with dementia

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# Leading dementia quality care

**Over the past few years, the aged care sector has entered a phase of accelerated change.**

We are now experiencing the cumulative impact of Aged Care Quality Standards reform, The Royal Commission, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the recent introduction of Serious Incident Reporting and the requirement for Behaviour Support Plans. The associated public scrutiny has impacted consumer confidence and staff morale.

This raft of challenges exists in the context of an ageing population and workforce. The next generation of aged care clients will have higher expectations for quality care and aging well. At the same time, ongoing challenges with staff recruitment and retention will be amplified by the retirement of an aging workforce.

**This is the time to transform the aged care system.**

The Royal Commission's recommendations require the aged care sector to significantly and rapidly transform to meet the needs of people living with dementia. This reform is also essential to rebuild consumer confidence and attract the next generation of sector leaders to the workforce.

With over 50 per cent of aged care residents living with dementia and more than two-thirds (68.1 per cent) living with moderate to severe cognitive impairment, the sector can no longer consider dementia quality care as 'value-adding' or 'nice to have'.

The requirement for the sector to deliver quality dementia care is synonymous with delivering quality aged care.

Equally, as more people living with dementia choose to live at home longer, home care providers and their staff are experiencing much greater expectations to respond to more complex care needs.

We know meeting the requirements of the Aged Care Quality Standards for people living with dementia requires a workforce with knowledge, skills and empathy.

When staff aren't equipped to perform the requirements of their roles, they become more susceptible to burnout and attrition and may pose a higher risk in the workplace.

**This is a critical decision point where organisations can choose to become leaders in quality dementia care.**

They can choose to prioritise workforce education and dementia-friendly design and create a culture where staff are empowered to deliver person-centred care.

We have always believed that if you get it right for people living with dementia, you get it right for everyone. We look forward to supporting you to take your first or next steps towards becoming sector leaders.



**Dr David Sykes**

Director, Centre for Dementia Learning

# The leading national provider of dementia education

As the collective voice for people living with dementia and a leader in dementia education, Dementia Australia is here to support you, your workforce and the people in your care.

Through the Centre for Dementia Learning, we continue to successfully extend access to our professional education across Australia. Our offerings reflect over 35 years' practice and leadership in dementia education.



Quality dementia  
education delivered  
**across the  
country**



Delivered education to  
**58,254\***  
participants



**37,098\***  
online learning  
enrolments



**2,784^**  
participants joined our **virtual classrooms**,  
an online mode of delivery that supports  
**continuous learning**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, our **interactive virtual classrooms** helped service providers access **quality dementia education** to upskill their staff and **improve the quality of life** for people living with dementia.

\*between 01/07/2018 and 30/06/2021 | ^between 01/07/2020 and 30/06/2021





# Education designed to embed quality dementia care

Quality dementia care must become an intrinsic, core element of aged care in Australia. As the peak body for dementia, we are committed to helping aged care providers build the dementia capability of their workforce.

We recognise and value the important role your staff play in supporting people living with dementia. We also understand the range of knowledge and skills required to deliver quality dementia care. Our education programs are designed to maximise team potential, build skills and strengthen their capability to make a difference to the lives of people living with dementia and their families.

**We offer a range of programs to address workforce training needs and engage participants in learning that is accessible, memorable and translational.**

We work closely with people living with dementia, their families and carers to create learning experiences that translate into everyday practice.

We also offer a flexible education approach through tailored learning pathways. From workshops, virtual classrooms and Communities of Practice to mentoring and coaching, Dementia Australia works with you to find the best way to deliver engaging learning.



**They are always trying new things and that's what I like about working with Dementia Australia.**

- Bridget Howes, General Manager – Model of Care, BlueCross

## Engaging education with real impact

Our education programs do more than ensure people living with dementia receive better quality care, they also help build the confidence of your staff. This proactive and preventative approach improves staff satisfaction, reduces stress and supports staff retention, saving you recruitment and onboarding costs.

### Programs backed by research and evidence

Our leading-edge technology programs are designed using evidence-based research. We also contribute to this evidence by formally evaluating our programs through Australian universities. Several published studies confirm the benefits of our approach to dementia education. These include:

- Recently published in peer reviewed journals, Swinburne University evaluations of the Virtual Dementia Experience and Educational Dementia Immersive Experience.
- A study by Gilmartin-Thomas et al. (2018) examined the benefits of our virtual reality (VR) program for pharmacy and medical students. The results showed the program was impactful and engaging with students developing empathy towards people living with dementia following the training.
- Stargate et al. (2021) found VR technology **'an innovative medium to simulate complex situations and may enable carers to take the perspective of a person living with dementia.'**

# Dementia Practice Health Check



Providing quality care begins with an understanding of how you deliver care now. This allows you to identify your strengths and areas for improvement in dementia practice.

**Dementia Practice Health Check is an online tool that helps you assess the current dementia capability of your workforce, prioritise areas for improvement and identify opportunities for staff development.**

Start by completing the free, short survey for managers [online](#).

This self-assessment tool is the first step in reflecting on your organisation's performance.

You can gain further insights and assess your team's performance by asking them to complete the staff survey. Results are compiled in a detailed baseline report to:

- Help you monitor internal performance and demonstrate improvement over time by establishing an important baseline.
- Assist your organisation in meeting the Aged Care Quality Standards.
- Allow you to benchmark your performance against other residential aged care organisations.

Dementia Practice Health Check is underpinned by the Aged Care Quality Standards and consumer expectations outlined in the 2019 Dementia Australia Consumer summit recommendations.



## Step 1

Complete our free residential aged care manager survey.



**5 minutes**



## Step 2

Have your team complete the staff survey.



**45 minutes**



## Step 3

Receive your health check report and recommendations.

For more information visit [dementialearning.org.au/practice-health-check](https://dementialearning.org.au/practice-health-check)



Over 275 aged care staff have completed our Dementia Practice Health Check. The survey results have helped individual care homes identify and plan education for focused and targeted practice improvement. These results also help us examine participant knowledge, skills and confidence, and see emerging trends for further training opportunities.

## What we have learned



Over a third of staff **do not seek input** from people living with dementia when developing their support plans.

Nearly 50% of staff are unaware of **wayfinding strategies**.



More than half did not understand the importance of residents being able to **move freely outdoors**.



Over 60% **do not recognise the rights** of residents with dementia to make decisions or provide feedback about their support.

A quarter of staff **lack confidence** in identifying pain.



A third of staff are not confident in following **best-practice guidelines** to support changed behaviour.



One-third of staff are **not confident about delirium**.



More than a quarter of staff do not feel they have the **knowledge and skills** to deliver quality dementia care.

# Consultancy

**Transform dementia care in your organisation and make a profound difference to the experience of people affected by dementia, now and into the future.**

Our consultants can guide you in implementing evidence-based, sustainable changes to improve dementia care. We tailor our service to meet your unique organisational requirements and challenges.

The focus of our consultancy work is people. Our consultancy framework identifies opportunities for change and growth that will encourage engagement across the whole organisation. We look at ways to guide and empower staff to drive continuous improvement.

We assess the current state of care, incorporating lived experience and feedback from people living with dementia and their families. We work with your team to initiate improvements that will help you create a strong care community and a competitive business advantage.

**[dementialearning.org.au/consultancy](https://dementialearning.org.au/consultancy)**



## Education Partnerships

We are currently developing a new program to help organisations determine their position on a continuum of working towards dementia excellence. Our experts will work with you to develop a learning plan to improve the quality of your dementia care through team education and consultancy. Participating organisations will be recognised as education partners of Dementia Australia. We look forward to sharing this exciting new program with you in 2022.

“

**Moyola Lodge would not be who we are without Dementia Australia's consultancy. (...) They are supportive, they show us, staff, families how we can make a difference in a life of somebody living with dementia ”**

- Polly Devine, CEO, Moyola Aged Care

# Environmental Audits



**Providing a dementia-friendly environment is an integral part of providing quality care. A person's environment can influence their behaviours and significantly impact their ability to live well with dementia.**

The Royal Commission advocated for accessible and dementia-friendly design features and small household models in place of larger facilities.

**Our team of consultants can help you create environments that enable people living with dementia to feel supported and engaged and live as independently as possible.**

Following an on-site environmental audit of your aged care, acute care or community care setting, we provide you with a report, including:

- What design features are working well.
- Recommendations to make incremental improvements to your organisation's environment.

Our recommendations will help your organisation:

- Reduce risk without impacting a person's ability to live a connected and meaningful life.
- Balance budget considerations with providing an environment that feels home-like, familiar and secure.
- Ensure the needs of people living with dementia are prioritised above all other requirements.

Our recommendations are practical, achievable and specific to your organisation and setting. We provide options to suit all situations, needs and budgets.

We can also review plans for renovations and new constructions to comply with standards.



# Ask Annie

## Immersive learning

Daily support responsibilities and competing demands can make it difficult for care workers to find time to improve their skills.

Ask Annie is an innovative education platform that offers micro-learning modules on mobile devices. These self-paced modules can be completed on the go.

‘Annie’ is a virtual care worker who guides staff through scenarios to strengthen their dementia care skills. This easy-to-use application makes learning interactive and intuitive.

Modules are suitable for experienced staff and people with no previous dementia education. Content is written in plain language and supported by videos, making it engaging and inclusive.

**“ I would highly recommend it to everybody because it’s fun, immersive and very, very intelligent. I think it’s quite ground-breaking. ”**

– Dionne Lewis, Personal Carer, BlueCross

### Program benefits:

- Staff learn practical, action-based skills to address challenging situations and safely support people living with dementia.
- Your workforce feels comfortable applying a preventative approach to positively support people living with dementia.
- People living with dementia and their families feel confident in the support being provided.

Ask Annie has been designed for staff working in home, disability or community care services supporting people living with dementia. A specific version for residential care workers will be released soon. Ask Annie can be purchased through Dementia Australia via a licensing agreement.



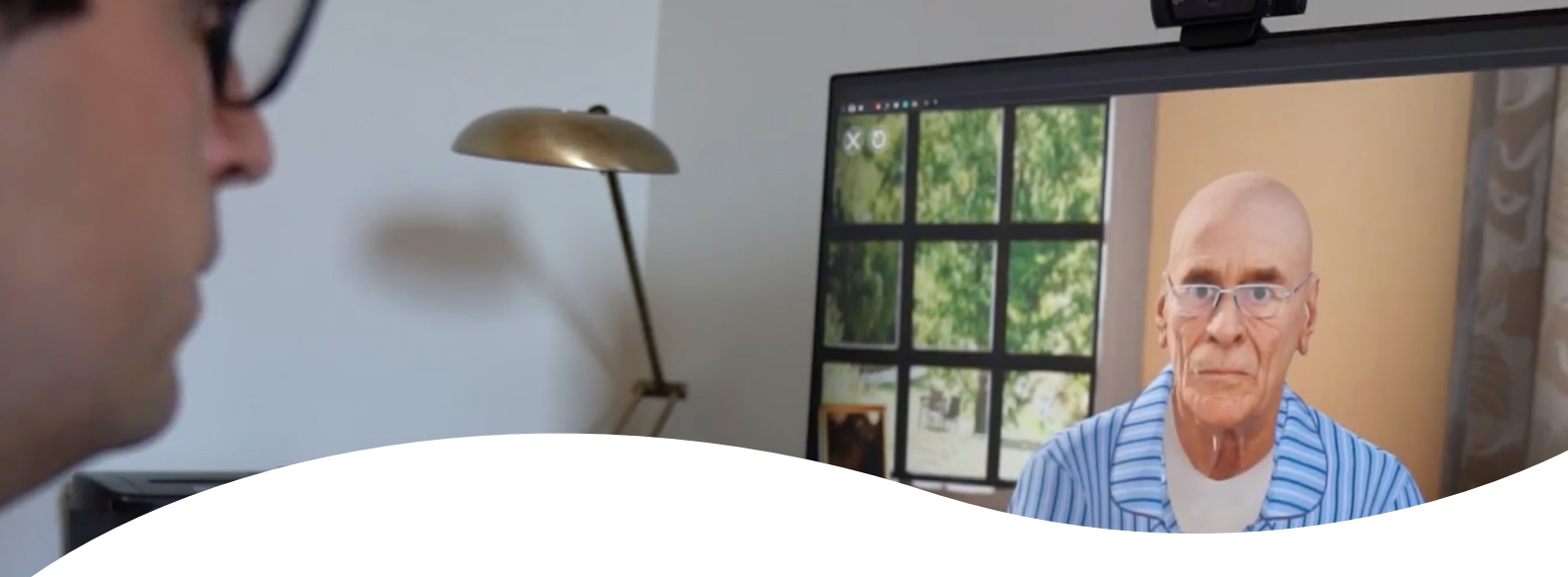
**Delivery:** mobile



**[dementialearning.org.au/  
technology/ask-annie](https://dementialearning.org.au/technology/ask-annie)**

Ask Annie has been funded by a Gandel Philanthropy multi-year Major Grant. Dementia Australia extends its appreciation to Gandel Philanthropy for making this exciting project possible.





# Talk with Ted

## Immersive learning

Our choice of words or tone of voice can help reduce stress and decrease changed behaviours in people living with dementia.

Talk with Ted is an award-winning experience that uses Artificial Intelligence. 'Ted' is an online character, programmed with symptoms commonly associated with dementia. Through simulation, staff can communicate with him in a realistic and safe space, to practise verbal communication skills and build confidence.

Online delivery makes Talk with Ted widely accessible. Staff can complete the program at a time and location convenient for them.

Participants talk with 'Ted' before engaging in online learning to build skills and approaches in respectful communication. These learnings are then applied in a second conversation.

Evaluations have shown that Talk with Ted participants were able to recall their learnings up to eight weeks following the training. They were also inspired to incorporate their learnings into their practice.

### Program benefits:

- Staff learn how to respectfully communicate with people living with dementia.
- Your workforce applies a person-centred approach to communication.
- People living with dementia feel valued and respected by carers who listen and respond to their choices.

Talk with Ted can also be used as a recruitment tool to help your organisation identify potential employees who are skilled in supporting people living with dementia.



**Delivery:** online simulation  
(one hour)



**[dementialearning.org.au/  
technology/talk-with-ted](https://dementialearning.org.au/technology/talk-with-ted)**



# Enabling EDIE

## Immersive learning

Demonstrating empathy is an essential component of delivering quality dementia care. It can help staff better connect with the people in their care and understand the reasons for changed behaviour.

Enabling EDIE (Educational Dementia Immersive Experience) is a virtual reality workshop that allows staff to experience what it can be like to live with symptoms of dementia. Staff will explore ways to improve their practice and help the people they care for live more independently.

Since launching in 2016, more than 10,000 aged care staff have taken part in this popular education program.

### Program benefits:

- Staff develop insight and empathy, and a better understanding of the symptoms and impact of dementia.
- Your workforce develops skills and confidence and understands the needs of people living with dementia.
- People living with dementia have a support plan focused on the goals that matter to them.

Enabling EDIE is now available in Asia, Europe, Canada and New Zealand.



**Delivery:** face-to-face  
(three hours)



**Virtual reality**



**[dementialearning.org.au/  
technology/enabling-edie-  
workshop](https://dementialearning.org.au/technology/enabling-edie-workshop)**

“

**To see the reactions of the staff, to see a couple of my personal carers crying, the emotion that was just overwhelming for them. They have gone on from that day and I have seen a much more empathetic group of people. ”**

- Darinka Rozanic, General Manager, Moran Roxburgh Park



# A Day in the Life— Mealtime Experience

## Immersive learning

Ensuring people living with dementia eat a well-balanced, nutritious diet is important for overall health and care outcomes. Poor nutrition was highlighted through the Royal Commission as a major health problem for many older people, especially those living with dementia.

A Day in the Life—Mealtime Experience helps staff provide a better mealtime experience and improve the health outcomes for people in their care.

Using virtual reality, staff can experience mealtime through the eyes of a person living with dementia.

### Program benefits:

- Staff explore ways to improve and optimise nutrition and hydration for people living with dementia.
- Your workforce feels encouraged to apply creative strategies for planning, preparing and delivering quality mealtime experiences.
- People living with dementia feel supported to enjoy their mealtime experience.



**Delivery:** face-to-face  
(three hours)



**Virtual reality**



**[dementialearning.org.au/  
technology/a-day-in-the-  
life-mealtime-experience](https://dementialearning.org.au/technology/a-day-in-the-life-mealtime-experience)**

“

**Ted's perspective, the lights, the noise, people coming and going, opened my eyes up because we don't look at the mealtime from his point of view.** ”

- Rhett Hobbs, Personal Care Assistant, Lifestyle, BlueCross Monterey

# Foundation learning

People living with dementia need individualised, person-centred support. Our foundation learning courses help staff build critical knowledge, practical skills and confidence in delivering quality dementia care.

## Dementia Essentials

### CHCAGE005–Provide support to people living with dementia

Build your team's expertise with this fully funded, nationally accredited course designed for aged care, healthcare and disability workers. This course offers skills and strategies to help with communication, planning, developing activities and understanding changed behaviours in people living with dementia.

Staff can choose a mode of learning that works for their needs. We offer learning face-to-face, online via our virtual classroom—or a combination of both.

This course is highly structured, combining theory and practical components for an engaging learning experience. Participants receive ongoing support from experienced facilitators throughout the program.

This is a Dementia Training Australia (DTA) course, funded by the Australian Government under the Dementia and Aged Care Services Fund and delivered by Dementia Australia (RTO Code 2512).

Visit [dta.com.au](https://dta.com.au) for more information.



#### Delivery options:



face-to-face (18 hours) **or**



online and face-to-face (18 hours) **or**



online and virtual classroom (18 hours) **or**



online (18 hours)



[dementialearning.org.au/course/chcage005-dementia-essentials](https://dementialearning.org.au/course/chcage005-dementia-essentials)





## Understanding Dementia

Despite its prevalence in Australia, dementia is still misunderstood as a condition.

This workshop provides an overview of dementia, including the signs and symptoms, causes, types of dementia and how it affects the brain and behaviour. Participants learn strategies to provide appropriate, person-centred support to people living with dementia.

## Building Relationships

Empower your staff to build strong and trusting relationships with people living with dementia, their families and carers. Participants learn strategies to seek and gather feedback and promote positive communication during every interaction. Improving client communication will also have benefits for your organisation's complaints process.

## Achieving Purposeful Engagement

People living with dementia who are fulfilled and engaged experience fewer changed behaviours. By understanding an individual's needs, strengths and abilities, staff can plan suitably engaging activities. In this course, participants learn how to meaningfully engage and work in partnership with people living with dementia.

## Applying a Problem-Solving Approach to Behaviours

Increased stress and frustration can lead to changed behaviours in people living with dementia. This course helps staff identify the source of stress, implement strategies to reduce stress and de-escalate behaviours before they cause physical or emotional risk to the person and others.

### Delivery options:



face-to-face (three hours)

or



virtual classroom (two hours)



[dementialearning.org.au/courses/foundation-learning](https://dementialearning.org.au/courses/foundation-learning)

# Leadership, coaching and mentoring

**Strong leadership is fundamental to the delivery of high-quality dementia care\*. It is also critical to guiding an organisation and its staff through cultural change.**

Improve the dementia capability of your workforce by developing and empowering your staff. Dementia Australia offers an expanding range of programs to support the sustainable, long-term transformation of dementia practice. Our programs provide opportunities for ongoing development and pathways for future leaders in the sector.

## **Certificate IV in Dementia Practice**

This accredited course is designed to enhance the existing dementia knowledge, skills and practice of your workforce. It provides participants with advanced tools to become leaders in implementing practice change so they can support staff, families and carers in improving the lives of people living with dementia.

\*This was recognised as a critical element of sustained practice improvements by both the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety and the Department of Health response.

## **Dementia Communities of Practice**

Empower your staff to drive organisational transformation in supporting people living with dementia. Communities of Practice is an exciting group initiative offering valuable insights for participants to foster innovation and achieve practice change. Share ideas, learn about new trends and connect with knowledge experts and leaders in dementia care.

## **Meaningful Engagement Mentors Program**

Support your staff in developing advanced skills in planning and delivering individualised engagement. Your staff will learn how to plan engaging activities that enhance the quality of life for a person living with dementia. Knowledge and experience are then shared with other team members to help them plan and deliver meaningful activities.

For delivery options contact  
Centre for Dementia Learning on  
**1300 DEMENTIA (1300 336 368)**  
or email [cdl@dementia.org.au](mailto:cdl@dementia.org.au)



# Supporting your clients, their families and carers

**Dementia Australia offers education sessions for people living with dementia in your care, their families and carers.**

These sessions give your clients the tools to build their understanding of dementia and learn effective coping strategies. They also provide an opportunity to meet others in a similar situation, socialise and share important links to local support services.

## **Help is available**

Our specialist support services enable people living with dementia to live as well as possible at every stage, even after transitioning into residential aged care.

To refer your client to Dementia Australia, visit [\*\*dementia.org.au/referral\*\*](https://dementia.org.au/referral)

To organise an education session for your clients or to refer your clients, call the **National Dementia Helpline on 1800 100 500**

**For further information and  
enquiries please contact:**

**1300 DEMENTIA**  
(1300 336 368) or

email **[cdl@dementia.org.au](mailto:cdl@dementia.org.au)**

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Find us online

**[dementialearning.org.au](http://dementialearning.org.au)**



Some programs are funded by the Australian Government or jointly funded by the Victorian and Australian Governments through the Home and Community Care Program for Young People.

DISCLAIMER: The information in this publication was correct at time of printing – November 2021. Please check our website [dementialearning.org.au](http://dementialearning.org.au) for current information.

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