

Dementia Information – Sally-Ann Spencer Grey

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http://www.dementiaaction.org.uk/assets/0000/4336/dementia_friendly_environments_checklist.pdf

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dementia-friendly-health-and-social-care-environments-hbn-08-02>

Dementia is an 'umbrella' term; it describes the symptoms that occur when the brain is affected by certain diseases or conditions. There are many different types of dementia although some are far more common than others e.g. Alzheimer's disease, vascular dementia or damage from a series of strokes.

Changes are often small to start with but can still have a significant effect on the individual. Symptoms may include memory loss and difficulties with thinking, problem-solving or language. Dementia is progressive with symptoms gradually get worse over time.

The specific symptoms that someone with dementia experiences and how quickly it progresses will depend on the parts of the brain that are damaged and the disease that is causing the dementia.

Some symptoms include:

- Difficulties making decisions, solving problems or carrying out a sequence of tasks
- Difficulties reading words or following a conversation or finding the right word for something
- Difficulties with mobility and balance
- Problems judging distances (e.g. on stairs) and seeing objects in three dimensions
- Losing track of the day or date, or becoming confused about where they are or attempting to leave
- People with dementia may also have hearing and sight impairments

Having a dementia friendly environment can help the person with dementia stay independent, and can help to reduce their stress, agitation and confusion.

Some considerations to improve environments for those with dementia include:

Increased intensity of lighting, signage (words and pictures), recognisable furniture, clear differences between wall and floor colour, contrasting texture and/or colours at the beginning and ends of stairs, contrasting leading edges on stairs, hand rails that contrast with the wall, items to help 'way finding', appropriate walking aids, slip-resistant, matt finished flooring with no patterns and shadows, appropriate visual cues to reduce the risk of mal-nutrition and dehydration, safe, level and uncluttered internal and external environments to reduce the risk of slips, trips and falls, contrasting colour toilet seat, easy to open doors.