



Dementia-Friendly Grocery Stores

Grocery stores can be especially challenging for people with dementia. These customers may have special needs and require additional support to successfully complete their shopping. While the experience may occur anywhere from rarely to frequently, grocery store employees are likely to encounter customers with dementia in the course of their work. As a dementia-friendly business, your grocery store can provide a higher level of customer service to all members of the community.

WHAT IS DEMENTIA?

Dementia is a term used to describe the symptoms of more than 100 conditions that are characterized by a decline in memory or other thinking skills that affect a person's ability to perform everyday activities.

SIGNS OF DEMENTIA

Many dementias are progressive, with signs and symptoms starting out slowly and gradually getting worse. While symptoms of dementia can vary greatly, at least two of the following core mental functions must be significantly impaired to be considered dementia:

- Judgment
- Perception
- Reasoning
- Organizational abilities
- Memory
- Abstract thinking
- Communication and language
- Ability to focus and pay attention
- Orientation to time and place
- Awareness of socially appropriate norms
- Ability to Filter Emotional Responses

WHAT IS A DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY BUSINESS?

Dementia-friendly businesses recognize the challenges that accompany dementia and help enable people with dementia to have a good quality of life. Their personnel are able to recognize the signs of dementia, communicate with people with dementia, and locate resources and assistance for themselves and for the people they serve.

DEMENTIA-FRIENDLY BUSINESS GUIDELINES

- Train all members of management and at least 50 percent of front-line staff.
- Designate a team leader to speak on behalf of the business.
- Be open to discussions regarding environment changes (lighting, signage, etc.).
- Share all training materials with new hires and those unable to attend the in-person trainings.
- Encourage all new employees to take the free, 20-minute online training found at www.uwosh.edu/dementia, listed under "Additional Courses" in the left navigation.



DEMENTIA IN GROCERY STORES

Shopping for groceries is a complex task that requires memory in order to know what is needed, what each item is called, and where it is located in the store, making it an especially challenging task for those with dementia. Self-service can be overwhelming, as bulk food items must be labeled with the proper code and/or weighed and packaged prior to checkout. Having to recall special customer numbers or other discount information can also cause anxiety at the checkout. It can be difficult for people with dementia to follow sets of instructions or directions containing multiple steps. Using debit or credit cards to pay often requires answering five or more questions on the payment keypad, which can be overwhelming and frustrating for someone with dementia.

Small changes throughout a grocery store can make a huge impact. Place signs with large, basic black letters on a light background at the end of each aisle. Limit how often items change locations in the store. Provide staff to assist and accompany customers to complete their tasks. Offer an order and delivery component. Consider the concept of a relaxed lane for checkout—a lane designated as one that provides additional time and assistance to customers. Above all else, staff awareness, understanding, and patience are crucial.

RESOURCES

For more information on dementia and how to become dementia-friendly, visit:

- Is It Dementia: A Resource for Recognizing the Signs of Dementia
<http://isitdementia.com.au>
- A Toolkit for Building Dementia-Friendly Communities
<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/publications/p01000.pdf>
- Adult Protective Services
<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/aps/index.htm>
- Dementia Care Specialist
<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/adrc/dementia-care-specialist-program.htm>
- Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)
<https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/adrc/consumer/index.htm>
- Alzheimer's Association
www.alz.org
- Alzheimer's and Dementia Alliance of Wisconsin
www.alzwisc.org
- CDC Healthy Brain Initiative
www.cdc.gov/aging/healthybrain

