

# Exploring a Business Community’s Perceptions and Readiness Surrounding a Dementia-Friendly Workplace

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## Introduction

- Dementia-friendly communities are important to reduce social isolation of individuals with cognitive impairment and help promote well-being and community engagement <sup>1</sup>
- International efforts are emerging to build dementia-friendly communities<sup>2</sup>
- As part of a local county initiative, dementia-friendly workplace training was provided to local businesses, first responders, and government agencies

## Study Aim

The purpose of the study is to explore the perceptions of a community’s readiness surrounding an inclusive, dementia-friendly workplace

## Methods

- Secondary analysis of 340 surveys administered to community members completing dementia-friendly business training
- Responses from preliminary question, “What do you hope to learn from this training?” were analyzed
- Analysis: Thematic coding

## Results

Analysis of 435 responses revealed the following themes:

- Signs & symptoms/ understand condition/ recognize if someone has it:

*“signs and symptoms”*

*“what dementia looks like”*

*“how to identify a person who has dementia”*

- How to help, interact or communicate:

*“better interactions”*

*“strategies for talking to people with dementia”*

*“how to approach them”*

*“ways to assist people with dementia”*

- Resources:

*“resources in the community”*

*“where to refer people who have dementia”*

- Learn self-insight of behaviors toward those with cognitive impairments:

*“to be compassionate”;*

*“to be respectful and calm”*

*“realizing your own strengths and weaknesses”*

## Discussion

- A large body of evidence exists regarding signs and symptoms of dementia as well as communication strategies<sup>3</sup>
- The current study findings extend this literature by:
  - identifying specific types of knowledge needed to create a dementia-friendly workplace
  - highlighting importance of expanding this education model to the broader community
- In addition, findings suggest that accessing expectations of training participants prior to implementing training may be beneficial
- Overall, these findings emphasize the importance of training individuals about dementia in the workplace

## Implications for OT

- OT has important role in education, community integration, and building community partnerships
- Providing strong foundational knowledge about dementia is an important step to build more broad and complex skills and strategies
- Importance of accessing individuals’ preparedness and readiness to learn, and having conversations earlier before initiating training

## References

• <sup>1</sup>Mitchell, L., & Burton, E. (2010). Designing dementia-friendly neighbourhoods: helping people with dementia to get out and about. *Journal of Integrated Care*, 18(6), 11-18.

• <sup>2</sup>Lin, S. Y., & Lewis, F. M. (2015). Dementia friendly, dementia capable, and dementia positive: concepts to prepare for the future. *The Gerontologist*, 55(2), 237-244.

• <sup>3</sup>Smith, E. R., Broughton, M., Baker, R., Pachana, N. A., Angwin, A. J., Humphreys, M. S., ... & Hegney, D. (2011). Memory and communication support in dementia: research-based strategies for caregivers. *International Psychogeriatrics*, 23(02), 256-263.