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Dementia
Enabling Environments™

Adapting Your Home



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the dementia care experts

Adapting your home

The 'Adapting Your Home' booklet will provide you with knowledge on key dementia enabling design principles and characteristics, and how these can be applied to different areas of the home. There are many simple modifications that anybody can make to their home or garden to make a significant difference to a person living with dementia. An enabling environment can encourage independence, quality of life and wellbeing.

Home enabling checklist

At the end of this booklet, you will find a home enabling checklist that will guide you through a range of points to consider in each room of the home. The questions in the checklist aim to prompt how the environment could be improved for someone living with dementia by promoting independence and wellbeing. For example, looking for trip hazards due to uneven surfaces, lighting levels are sufficient for someone to access the environment with ease and everyday items are located in easy to identify locations.

Home assessment

If you live in Western Australia, you may be able to access a home assessment by one of Alzheimer's WA Occupational Therapy team members through NDIS, Home Care Package or Medicare. Please contact Alzheimer's WA for more information or check eligibility.

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Dementia Enabling Environments provides practical tips, guides and resources to make the physical environments more accessible and enabling for people living with dementia.

For more information

Visit our website: enablingenvironments.com.au

Join us on Facebook: facebook.com/dementiaenablingenvironments
or email us at: deep@alzheimerswa.org.au



Dementia Enabling Environments website

The Dementia Enabling Environments website provides practical tips, guides and resources to help make the places where we live more dementia enabling.

Use the website to explore different home settings, learn more about key design principles in each area of the houses, and to download useful information and resources.

For further information please visit enablingenvironments.com.au.

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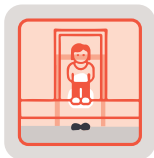
Dementia enabling environment principles

The Dementia Enabling Environment Principles are based on the work of Professor Richard Fleming and Kirsty Bennett, University of Wollongong. These principles are evidence based, and have been constructed from reviewing research literature of studies looking at maximising enablement and wellbeing for people living with dementia through physical design.



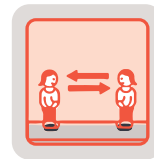
1. Unobtrusively reduce risks

People living with dementia require an internal and external environment that is safe, secure and easy to move around if they are to maximise their abilities. However, obvious safety features and barriers may lead to frustration, distress and anger and so potential risks need to be reduced unobtrusively.



2. Provide a human scale

The scale of a building will affect the feelings and behaviour of a person living with dementia. The experience of scale is determined by three factors; the number of people the person encounters, the overall size of the building, and the size of the individual component, such as doors, rooms and corridors. A person should not be intimidated by the size of the surroundings or confronted with a multitude of interactions and choices. Rather the scale should help the person feel in control.



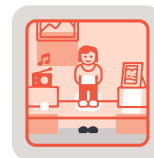
3. Allow people to see and be seen

The provision of an easily understood environment will help to minimise confusion. It is particularly important for people living with dementia to be able to recognise where they are, where they have come from and what they will find if they head in a certain direction. When they can see key places, such as a lounge room, dining room, their bedroom, kitchen and an outdoor area they are more able to make choices and find their way to where they want to go. Buildings that provide these opportunities are said to have good visual access. Good visual access opens up opportunities for engagement and gives the person living with dementia the confidence to explore their environment.



4. Reduce unhelpful stimulation

Because dementia may reduce the ability to filter stimulation and attend to only those things that are important, a person living with dementia may become distressed by prolonged exposure to large amounts of stimulation. The environment should be designed to minimise exposure to stimuli that are not helpful. The full range of senses must be considered. Too much visual stimulation is as stressful as too much auditory stimulation.



5. Optimise helpful stimulation

Enabling the person living with dementia to see, hear and smell things that give them cues about where they are and what they can do, can help to minimise their confusion and uncertainty. Consideration needs to be given to providing redundant cueing i.e. providing a number of cues to the same thing, recognising that what is meaningful to one person will not necessarily be meaningful to another. A person may recognise their bedroom, for example, because of a view, the presence of furniture, the colour of the walls, the light fitting and/or the bedspread. Cues need to be carefully designed so they do not add to unhelpful stimulation.



6. Support movement and engagement

Orientation and safe walking can be supported by providing a well defined pathway, free of obstacles and complex decision points. The pathway should guide people past points of interest and opportunities to engage in activities or social interaction. The pathway should be both internal and external, providing an opportunity and reason to go outside when the weather permits.



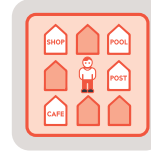
7. Create a familiar space

A person living with dementia may be more able to use and enjoy spaces and objects that were familiar to them in their early life. The environment should afford them the opportunity to maximise their abilities through the use of familiar building design (internal and external), furniture, fittings and colours. This will involve an understanding of the personal background of the people living in the environment. The person living with dementia should be encouraged to personalise the environment with their familiar objects.



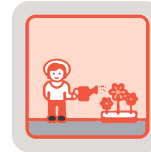
8. Provide opportunities to be alone or with others

People living with dementia have the right to choose to be on their own or spend time with others. This requires the provision of a variety of spaces, some for quiet conversation with one or two others and some for larger groups, as well as spaces where people can be by themselves. These internal and external spaces should have a variety of characters, e.g. a place for reading, talking or looking out the window, to cue the person to what is available and stimulate different emotional responses.



9. Provide links to the community

Without constant reminders of who they were, a person living with dementia may lose their sense of identity. Frequent interaction with friends and relatives can help to maintain that identity. Where the unit is a part of a larger site, there should be easy access around the site so people living with dementia, their families and friends can interact with other people who live there.



10. Respond to a vision for way of life

The environment should support the person living with dementia to lead a life that has meaning and value to them. The choice of this life style, or philosophy of care, will vary between facilities. Some will choose to focus on engagement with the ordinary activities of daily living and have fully functioning kitchens. Others will focus on the ideas of full service and recreation, while still others will emphasise a healthy life style or, perhaps, spiritual reflection. The way of life offered needs to be clearly stated and the building designed both to support it and to make it evident to the residents and staff. The building becomes the embodiment of the philosophy of care, constantly reminding the staff of the values and practices that are required while providing them with the tools they need to do their job.

For further information, read the literature review undertaken as part of this principle development. These principles are an extension of work first published in 1987 (1) and continued in 2003 (2).

References

1. Fleming R, Bowles J. Units for the confused and disturbed elderly: Development, design, Programming and Evaluation. Australian Journal on Aging. 1987 November; 6 (4):25-8
2. Fleming R, Forbes I, Bennett K. Adapting the ward for people with dementia. Sydney: NSW Department of Health; 2003

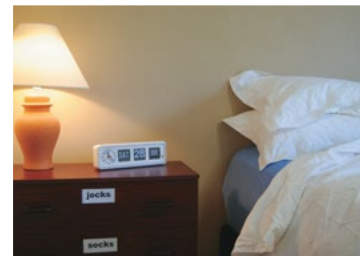
Enabling environment

Research suggests that the environment can help a person with dementia hold on to their world by maintaining ties with familiar and comfortable surroundings.

It is widely recognised that the environment can have a significant positive or negative affect on a person living with dementia.

An enabling environment is one that promotes independence and supports wellbeing.

- » Familiar surroundings
- » Allows for easy access and orientation within the home environment
- » Supports meaningful skills/tasks
- » Supports participation in daily activities
- » Promotes safety, security and independence
- » Provides comfort
- » Considers the physical and sensory changes to the person and/or care.



Personal considerations

- » Involve and enable the person to make choices and decisions
- » Consider the best time of day for the person to discuss changes to their home environment
- » Balance social participation and quiet time for the person and their carer
- » Provide orientation cues and prompts that are suitable and appropriate
- » Ensure wellbeing and identity is maintained
- » Support and encourage meaningful engagement
- » Ensure that the person feels valued and included.



How to improve lighting

1. Replace current globes with brighter ones to support good lighting levels within the home
2. Open curtains/blinds fully to maximise the daylight within individual rooms
3. Position seating for reading or similar activities to take advantage of sunlight
4. Installing skylights may be an option for rooms that are dark, or do not appear to have sufficient natural light for performing activities, or are not visually accessible
5. Installing different window treatments may be required to reduce glare and shadows during day or night
6. Consider using additional lighting such as lamps when performing tasks such as reading
7. Sensor lighting can reduce the risk of falls at night.





Adapt a home: Living room



The living room

1. **Principles 1 and 6:** Ensure ample circulation space. Remove rugs and excess clutter from the main circulation space to reduce the possibility of trips and falls. **Principle 3:** To allow the person living with dementia to see the environment clearly, ensure the flooring is of a contrasting colour to the furniture.
 2. **Principle 4:** Reduce unwanted stimulation by turning the television off if it isn't being used. **Principle 8:** Consider using a television with video calling capabilities or similar devices to enable the person living with dementia to keep in touch with friends and relatives.
 3. **Principle 3:** A door with contrasting coloured door frames and handles allow it to be seen easily and can therefore encourage movement through to other indoor/outdoor spaces.
 4. **Principle 3:** To help with day/time orientation consider using a clock which clearly displays the time, day and date on a large face or in bold numbers so that it can be seen easily. **Principle 7:** There are many different types of clocks available, so choose one that is familiar to the person living with dementia.
 5. **Principle 7:** The environment should include familiar and personal objects to encourage reminiscence.
 6. **Principle 5:** People with dementia require greater than average light levels. Check the house is sufficiently and evenly lit to reduce shadows and to achieve recommended lux levels. **Principle 4:** Ensure lights and window treatments reduce glare and reflections.
 7. **Principle 1:** To ensure safety in the case of a fire, check that smoke detectors are working.
 8. **Principle 3:** Ensure the colours of tables and chairs clearly contrast with the colour of the carpet, and the edges of tables and chairs are clearly defined. **Principle 1:** Avoid sharp edges on tables, and avoid furniture with glass as it may pose a safety hazard.
 9. **Principle 7:** Furniture must be recognisable and look like what it is supposed to be. Furniture and items must also be familiar to the person living with dementia. Encourage their choice of colour, style and furnishings where possible. Furniture should be at an appropriate height for the person. Use furniture that is comfortable and has good back and arm supports. Upholstery must be comfortable and durable.
 10. **Principle 5:** Keep curtains open during the day to let in natural light. **Principle 4:** Avoid bold patterns on curtains which may be confusing or disturbing to a person living with dementia. A person living with dementia may find shadows disturbing. If so, consider blackout blinds to keep out natural or artificial light at sunset and at night.
 11. **Principles 3 and 7:** A door-chime or door knocker for the main entrance can act as a prompt to go answer the door. To ensure its effectiveness, use a type that is most familiar to the person living with dementia.
 12. **Principle 5:** Use different textures in the living room to add sensory variation to the space. For example, a knitted throw on the couch and soft cushions.
 13. **Principle 1:** Be mindful of potential hazards such as electrical cords from lamps.
 14. **Principle 5:** Encourage personal interests such as puzzles that provide opportunities for meaningful engagement.
- Ensure there are clear colour contrasts between the door and the door frame so the person living with dementia can locate the exits easily (see website page on "Colour Perception and Contrast" for more helpful hints).

Adapt a home: Kitchen



The kitchen

- 1. Principle 7:** Use fixtures such as cross-head taps which may be more familiar to a person living with dementia, rather than mixer taps. **Principle 1:** Water flow monitors, flood detectors and pressure activated plugs can help reduce incidences of flooding and water-related slips and falls.
- 2. Principle 7; Principle 10:** Provide opportunities for familiar and meaningful engagement such as drying and storing the dishes away after a meal.
- 3. Principle 1:** To ensure safety in the kitchen ensure tiles are non-slip or use a non-slip treatment on ordinary tiles to make them slip resistant.
- 4. Principle 3:** See-through cabinets and open shelving allow for the quick and easy location of items inside kitchen cupboards.
- 5. Principle 1:** If a conventional cooktop is proving to be a hazard, consider replacing it with a safer, induction cooktop. This enables the person living with dementia to continue being an active participant in the household. Other safety devices include a safety cut off switch on the main power board, stove isolation switches, safety electrical cords, gas detectors and gas cut-off switches.
- 6. Principle 1:** Devices can be installed to adapt a conventional cooktop and make it safer. For example, a stove guard is a motion detector that automatically turns off the stove if the person moves away from it.
- 7. Principle 5:** Bring daylight into the space to ensure bright, even lighting (a minimum general light level of 600 lux).
- 8. Principle 3:** Be mindful of not creating a fire hazard.
- 9. Principle 7:** If a kitchen appliance such as a kettle needs to be replaced, ensure it is substituted with a similar kettle that looks and works in a way that is familiar to the person living with dementia.
- 10. Principle 3:** Frequently used items should be placed on the kitchen bench top or open shelf. **Principle 10:** Provide an opportunity for domestic activities like making a cup of tea.
- 11. Principle 3:** Kitchen servery provides a line of sight from kitchen to bedroom. Promotes inclusiveness if person is restricted to bedroom.
- 12. Principle 3:** A whiteboard can be used to note what is in the fridge or pantry and can also be used for shopping lists, reminders and important messages.

Setting up the kitchen

This kitchen shows how to use labels and clear cupboard doors to enable a person to see and find items.

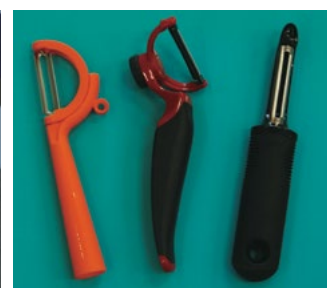
Place regularly used items in line of sight and group common items together to assist with completing everyday tasks such as making a cup of tea.



- » Breakfast cereal boxes
- » Tea, coffee, sugar, cup and kettle
- » Bread container and toaster

Visual prompts and sequence order can promote and support a person to take part in daily domestic activities. For example: moving left to right, wash and dry the dishes and put on the shelf.

If appropriate, consider assistive equipment such as the “kettle cradle” which reduces the risk of scalds and spills. Modified cutlery can be useful for people who need assistance with meal preparation and eating.



Adapt a home: Dining room



The dining room

- 1. Principle 5:** Music can be a welcome source of positive sensory stimulation or it can be negative overstimulation. Manage stimuli in the environment by controlling the type of music played, the volume, or by turning off the music if it is distracting for the person living with dementia. Choose music that has meaning to the person.
- 2. Principle 10:** Adopt a person-centred approach. Consider using adaptive cutlery and crockery if needed.
- 3. Principle 3:** Consider using plain, brightly coloured crockery that will contrast well with placemats and tablecloths, and also with the food on the plate.
- 4. Principle 7:** Furniture must be recognisable and look like what it is supposed to be. Does the chair look like a chair? Furniture and items must also be familiar to the person living with dementia.
- 5. Principle 3:** Colour contrast should be used to differentiate objects and also to make the edges of objects more obvious. Ensure good colour contrasts between crockery, placemats and the table/tablecloth. **Principle 1:** Placemats should also be non slip.
- 6. Principle 1:** Avoid sharp edges on tables, chairs, and other furniture. **Principle 3:** Ensure the colours of tables and chairs clearly contrast with the colour of the carpet, and the edges of tables and chairs are clearly defined.
- 7. Principle 5:** Have diffuse localised lighting above tables to supplement the general lighting (a minimum general light level of 300 lux is desirable).
- 8. Principle 5:** Plants and flowers are a great way of adding natural sensory stimulation in the environment, brightening up the atmosphere indoors though their colour, texture and fragrance. They also provide opportunities for care and nurturing from the person living with dementia.
- 9. Principle 10:** Keep crockery, cutlery, glasses and other table settings on the buffet table in the dining room so the person living with dementia can set the table for meals themselves. This helps the person retain their skills and encourages independence and meaningful activity.

Setting up the dining room

The images below are examples of a dining experience where there is colour contrast between chairs, table, flooring, tablecloth, plates, placemats, tea cups and saucers, which allows the diners to easily identify items for use.

A small vase with flowers creates familiarity and scent also adding to the comfort of the dining experience.

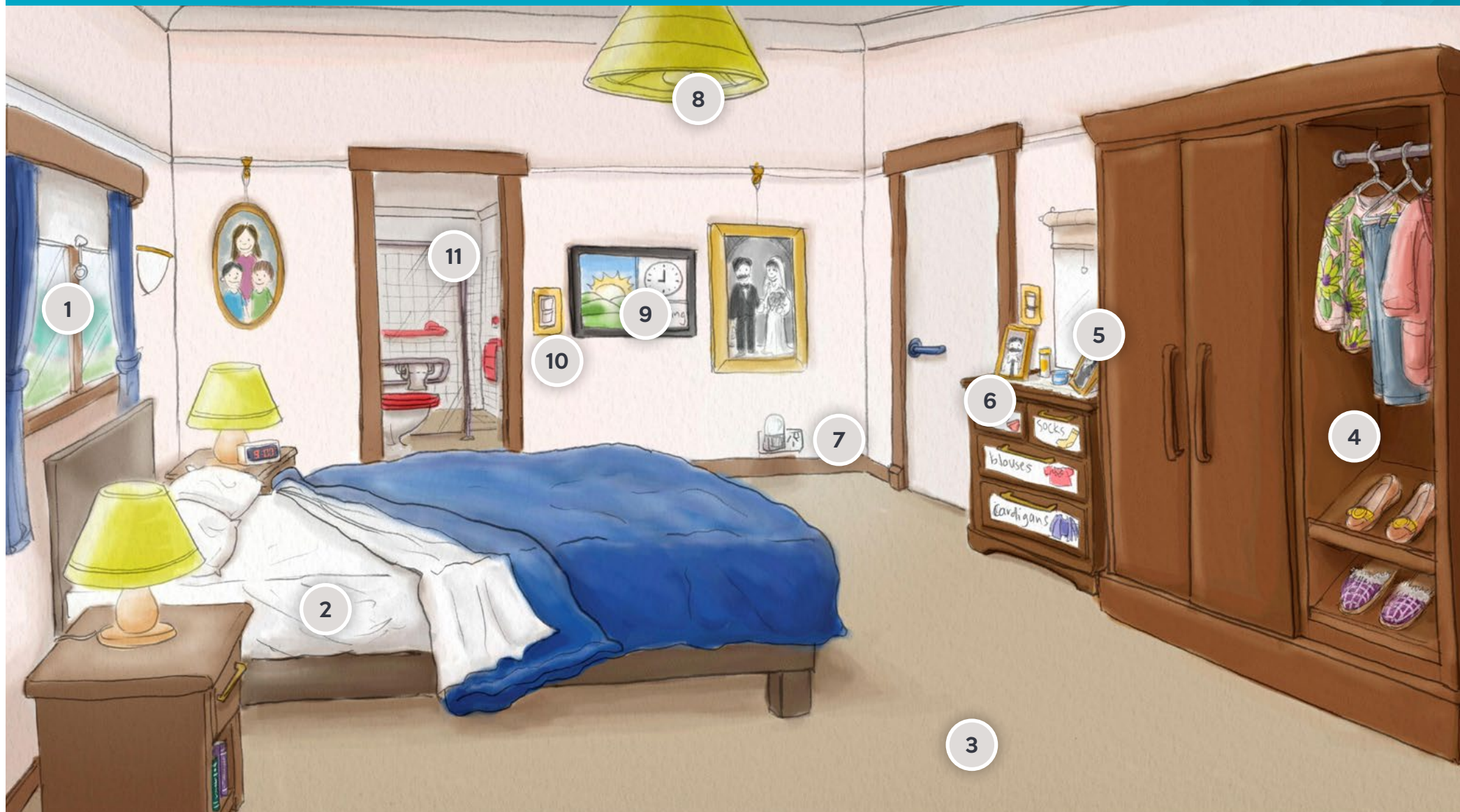




Good examples of colour contrast of walls, floors and furnishings, recognition of room purpose, natural daylight, and comfortable seating.

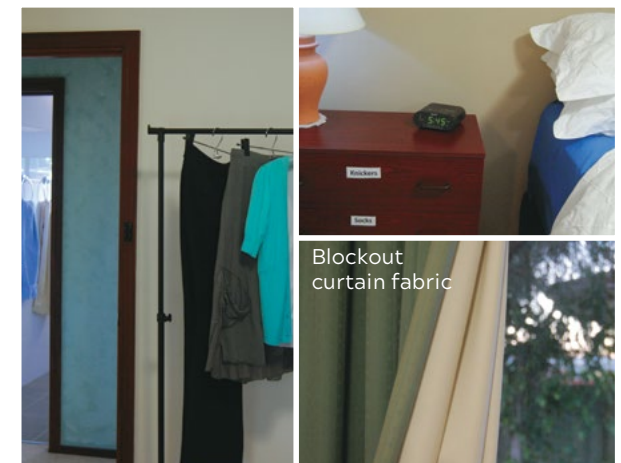


Adapt a home: Bedroom



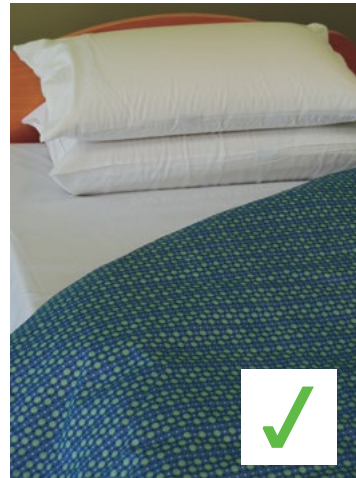
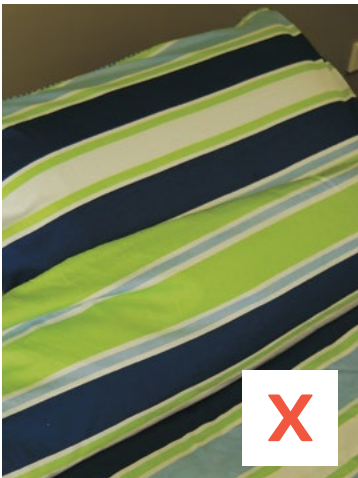
The bedroom

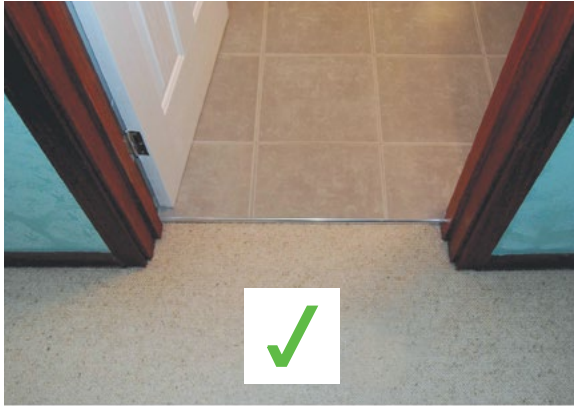
1. **Principle 4:** Blockout blinds can encourage a good night's rest and reduce the possibility of the person living with dementia seeing shadows and illusions cast onto curtains from external light sources.
2. **Principle 3:** In order to aid wayfinding to the bed ensure prominent colour contrasts between the floor, the bedhead and the cover sheet; and between the cover sheet and the pillow.
3. **Principles 1 and 6:** Ensure a clear pathway by removing clutter, rugs or chairs that may be in the way and could pose a fall risk.
4. **Principle 3:** To aid accessibility, remove doors from wardrobes so clothes can be seen easily. A dementia-specific wardrobe reduces confusion by minimising choice. For example, the next day's outfit can be hung on an open shelf ready to be worn the next morning. The rest of the garments can be stored away from sight until they need to be used again.
5. **Principle 4:** Some people with dementia may not recognise their reflection in a mirror and think a stranger is in the room. Consider removing or covering mirrors if this becomes a problem.
6. **Principle 7:** Remove clutter but maintain familiarity in the environment through the inclusion of photographs and objects that are important to the person.
7. **Principle 3:** Consider using a plug-in motion sensor light to illuminate the way to the bathroom at night.
8. **Principle 5:** Ensure even lighting with a minimum light level of 300 lux.
9. **Principle 3:** A clock that denotes whether it is day or night may help a person living with dementia to know whether it is time to wake up or time to sleep.
10. **Principle 3:** Ensure clear colour contrasts between the wall, the light switch box and the switch itself so that it can be identified without difficulty.
11. **Principle 3:** Keep the door open and ensure unobstructed sight lines from the bed to the toilet. This will allow for the bathroom to be located easily. Ensure there are clear colour contrasts between the door and the door frame so the person living with dementia can locate the exits easily (see our website page on "Colour Perception and Contrast" for more helpful hints).



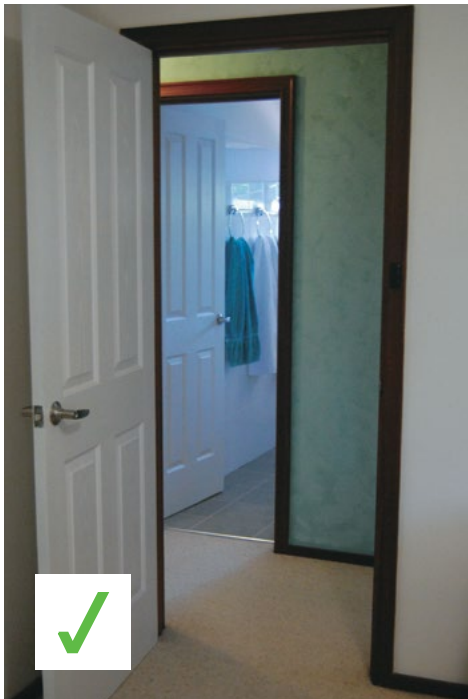
Setting up the bedroom

- » A direct line of sight from the bed to the bathroom/toilet helps with visual orientation
- » To create a sense of privacy ensure that curtains and blinds are drawn when dressing
- » Place orientation clock in optimum position for easy viewing
- » Avoid strong and bold patterns, as wavy or striped patterns can appear to be moving to a person with dementia
- » Some people may not recognise their reflection in a mirror, or understand what is real and what is a reflection. For some people a mirror may need to be covered or removed.





Where possible keep floor colours the same or similar, to avoid the appearance of floor level changes.



Direct line of sight from the bed to the bathroom/toilet.



Create opportunity for decision making by displaying a choice of clothes and shoes.



Wayfinding around a room with a huge mirror may be confusing and distressing for a person living with dementia.

Adapt a home: Bathroom



The bathroom

1. **Principle 1:** Keep the door open and ensure unobstructed sight lines from the bed to the toilet. This will allow for the bathroom to be located easily. **Principle 3:** To allow for the door handle to be located easily, ensure the colour of the door handle contrasts with the colour of the door. **Principle 1:** Ensure doors are unlockable from the outside.
2. **Principle 5:** Include natural sensory stimulation in the environment and keep the temperature comfortable by allowing for good ventilation, fresh air and sunlight from outside.
3. **Principle 3:** Use a coloured toilet seat that contrasts with the toilet, to ensure it can be seen easily.
4. **Principle 1:** Convert to a hand-held shower to make assisting with showers easier.
5. **Principle 1:** Ensure grab rails are securely fixed to the wall. **Principle 3:** Choose grab rails that are a contrasting colour to the wall.
6. **Principle 3:** Use non-reflective tiles in order to reduce glare. **Principle 1:** Ensure that surfaces especially on the floor are non-slip.
7. **Principle 5:** Heat lamps can be installed to keep the bathroom warm in the winter months.
8. **Principle 1:** Remove the shower curtain which may be dangerous if used as a support. Instead, consider replacing it with a fixed shower screen.
9. **Principle 3 and 6:** Consider using a passive infrared (PIR) light (a motion activated light) which can greatly aid wayfinding to the bathroom at night-time.
10. **Principle 1:** Use covers for sockets or consider switching to outdoor waterproof sockets. To ensure electrical safety use an RCD (residual current device) as the 'trip switch' will prevent electrical shocks especially in wet areas such as the bathroom.
11. **Principle 4:** Some people with dementia find glare and reflections from mirrors confusing and frightening. If this is the case consider removing or covering mirrors with a blind that matches the surrounding wall colour.
12. **Principle 5:** Ensure even lighting to achieve a minimum light level of 300 lux.
13. **Principle 3:** Ensure commonly used items such as soaps and shampoo are located so they can be seen and therefore used easily.
14. **Principle 7:** Use fixtures that are more familiar to the person living with dementia, such as cross-head taps rather than mixer taps. **Principles 1 and 6:** Flood prevention and detection devices can be used to prevent water damage and slips/falls. For example a pressure activated plug can prevent the sink from overflowing.
Principle 1: Thermostatic mixing valves for the main water supply or hot water cut off devices can be used to prevent scalds from very hot water.
15. **Principle 3:** If possible, adapt to a 'hobless' shower area which has continuous level flooring.
16. **Principle 1:** Consider installing a shower seat to make showering easier.

Adapt a home: Laundry



The laundry

- Principles 1 and 6:** To avoid slips and falls, ensure the laundry floor is non-slip and non-gloss to avoid glare and excessive reflectance.
Principles 3 and 6: To enable a person living with dementia to see the environment clearly, ensure colour contrasts between walls, skirting, floors and laundry appliances; and avoid the use of bold patterns on surfaces.
- Principle 7:** Use appliances that are familiar to the person living with dementia. If necessary they should be replaced with a similar model that looks and operates in the same way.
Principle 4: Consider removing washing machine water flow tap-heads to prevent accidental disconnection of water.
- Principle 1:** Ensure there is plenty of ventilation to prevent moisture building up on floors and causing slips, and to allow odours from cleaning solutions and solvents to leave the room.
- Principle 5:** Ensure the laundry is adequately lit to achieve a minimum level of 300 lux.
- Principle 4:** Remove excess clutter to avoid unnecessary confusion. Store frequently used items where they can be seen easily such as on open shelves, on a bench or in glass fronted cabinets.
- Principle 1:** Invest in an iron with safety cut-off mechanisms, an Iron Safe to allow the safe storage of a hot iron, and socket covers.
- Principle 1:** Dangerous chemicals can be stored in a separate and/or discreetly secured cabinet.
- Principle 1:** Ensure clothes dryers are vented outside or have a dehumidifier function.
- Principle 1:** To prevent flooding consider using a flood detector and ensure that the laundry has adequate drainage.
- Principle 3:** Use coloured door handles that contrast with the door so they can be seen easily.
Principles 3 and 10: Hang a washing line directly outside the laundry room so it can be easily seen and used. This helps the person living with dementia to retain skills and promotes independence. Consider installing a security screen door. The lockable mesh screen provides security while still allowing for fresh air and ventilation.
- Principle 1:** Ensure suitable floor waste drainage is maintained and in good working condition.
- Principle 1:** If required, install a pet door-flap so the person living with dementia doesn't have to remember to let pets out/in.
- Principle 10:** If space permits, leave the ironing board open and a basket of clothes ready to be ironed or folded. This can encourage activity, independence, and the retention of skills.



Automatic safety cut off iron





Garden design principles



1. Sustainability

The longevity of a dementia-specific garden is dependent on the understanding of its therapeutic value, activity programs and maintenance regime.



2. Orientation

People living with dementia may forget where they are going and from where they've come. This can be confining and inhibit them from exploring outdoors. By designing a garden that enables users to orientate themselves through visual cues they will gain a sense of control and self confidence.



3. Accessibility

Accessibility affects people living with dementia on both a physical and mental level. Ensure your garden is accessible to people living with dementia by removing the physical and mental barriers.



4. Socialisation

Enhance the quality of life of people living with dementia by creating opportunities to socialise and interact with friends, family, children, pets and carers.



5. Meaningful Activity

"People living with dementia still have the energy and desire to remain active and involved in the world around them. Throughout our lives, we develop activities and interests, hobbies, likes and dislikes, skills and talents that give our life structure and meaning and provide a sense of worth. These activities whether recreational or activities related to ordinary household tasks, establish a routine, provide opportunities for socialisation and help define who we are." Brawley, 2007



6. Reminiscence

For people living with dementia encouraging the act of reminiscence can be highly beneficial to their inner wellbeing and their interpersonal skills. Reminiscence involves exchanging memories with others and the passing on of information, wisdom and skills. By incorporating reminiscence elements and activities, people living with dementia are able to engage with the world around them and retain feelings of value, importance, belonging and peace.



7. Sensory Stimulation

Sensory stimulation is important in the overall emotional wellbeing of people living with dementia. It can convey emotional support, affection and respect and also play a major part in helping people living with dementia communicate. Sensory stimulation is the engaging of any of our five senses - sight, sound, taste, touch and smell.



8. Safety

Safety can be the defining factor for if a person living with dementia can access a garden space. Ensure all potential safety issues are addressed in the planning process of the garden.

References

Graham-Cochrane, Tara. 2010. Gardens that Care: Planning Outdoor Environments for People with Dementia. South Australia, Australia: Alzheimer's Australia SA Inc. Dementia Training Australia, dta.com.au

Outdoor planting

There is no greater joy for some people than having the opportunity to spend time in a garden. It is a chance to connect with nature and engage in the multisensory experience that a garden can provide, from growing edible foods that offer free produce, to nurturing plant growth, planting a seedling and watching it burst into full bloom, or listening to the wildlife that a garden attracts. A well designed garden, and the plants within it, can bring year round joy that supports a person living with dementia.

Colour and colour contrast

Colour and colour contrast play a major role in dementia enabling design. Colour can be used in the environment to clearly define spaces and points of interest for people living with dementia.

On the other hand, an inappropriate choice of colours can confuse or distress a person with dementia.



Plant choice

Some key issues to consider when choosing plants for your garden include:

- » Soil type and condition
- » Climate
- » Region (tropical, coastal, arid, other)
- » Location of plants in the garden
- » Sensory properties
- » Flowering season and colour throughout the year
- » Size and maturity of plant (is immediate impact required)
- » Water usage
- » Accessibility: raised garden beds or herb gardens to a recommended workable height of 700mm-800mm (depth if accessible from all sides 1200mm)
 - » Bench or table tops with vegetable bags may be a simpler and cheaper option
 - » Place raised garden beds next to a pathway for ease of reach.

Edible plants

- » Introducing edible plants brings a completely new sensory experience to gardening
- » Consider planting vegetables, fruits and herbs that can be picked straight from the garden to be used in the kitchen
- » For something different, consider introducing some native edible plants seeking advice from websites such as the Remote Indigenous Garden group.



Plants that minimise risk through careful selection can increase accessibility and engagement so consideration should be given to avoid plants that:

Cause skin tears

- » Roses are a perennial favourite in the garden and while beautiful to look at and often blessed with a lovely scent, they do represent a concern for fragile skin
- » Consider placing plants with thorns or spikes away from the path and further back into the garden. A decorative fence around a rose garden could assist or alternatively consider choosing roses with no thorns

- » Bougainvillea grows easily and adds bright colourful splashes to the garden, but consider locating behind a small trellis fence (approximately 1500mm high) with wire support so it is visible from the top of the fence upwards but out of accidental contact reach.



Are poisonous if ingested

- » Some plants can be poisonous to humans and animals if ingested so it is wise to avoid these
- » Plants with poisonous roots may not be as great a risk as plants with poisonous leaves such as Poinsettia. These can pose real risk in a garden utilised by a person living with dementia.

Can cause skin irritation

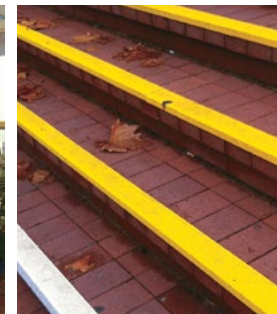
- » Stinging Nettle, Silky Oak and Lantana are a few of the plants that can leave a nasty skin rash if a person brushes against them. Poisonous plant guides available online include:
 - » Harmful garden plants in Western Australia
 - » Poisonous plant index
 - » Garden plants poisonous to people.

Adapt a home: Garden



The garden

- Principles 2, 3 and 6:** Steps leading into the garden or in the garden area need to be in good condition with easy and safe access and support rails if required. Ensure steps have good visibility from top step to bottom.
- Principle 4:** The boundary fence can be camouflaged with planting and made to blend in with the plants so it is unobtrusive. This will minimise the feeling of being contained in the garden.
- Principle 1:** Select plants carefully as there are many varieties that are poisonous when in contact with the skin or ingested.
- Principle 5:** Attract wildlife into your garden through features such as bird baths and feeders, and by planting flora and fauna which attract butterflies and birds. Such plants include Bottlebrush and Grevillea.
- Principle 3 and 6:** Ensure safe and clear pathways within the garden considering overhanging branches, plants with thorns, moss, mould, uneven or broken pavers or loose gravel. Consider using poured concrete for pathways. This ensures smooth and even paths that don't lift or move like conventional pavers.
- Principle 5 and 7:** Create an opportunity to grow a vegetable or herb garden.
- Principle 5 and 7:** Keep gardening tools handy to encourage meaningful gardening activities including planting, raking and sweeping.
- Principle 7:** An accessible shed enables people to continue pursuing their hobbies and retain skills they may have used for most of their lives. Ensure activities cater to the individual. This can promote independence, identity and confidence through meaningful engagement in a safe environment.
- Principle 5:** Consider planting seasonal or all year round flowering plants.
- Principle 8:** Ensure there are shaded areas to relax and sit comfortably.
- Principle 5:** Water features can add an extra sensory dimension to the garden.



Benefits of the garden

Being outdoors and among nature can create enjoyment with therapeutic benefits such as:

- » Opportunities for performing meaningful activities in the garden area or inside the shed
- » Rest, socialisation and recreational activities
- » Opportunity for walking and exercise
- » Providing emotional and spiritual wellbeing
- » Improving hormone balance and restoring normal resting heart rate.



Include meaningful activity in and around the garden



Provide garden beds of different heights for easy access.



Garden tools can prompt and encourage a person to work in the garden.



Growing your own vegies can be a rewarding and enjoyable activity.



Enjoy local bird life by providing bird baths and feeders.

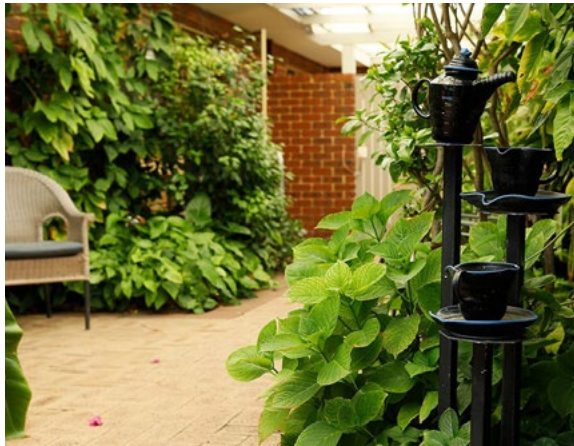


It is really enjoyable to share common interests with another.



Provide opportunity to sit and relax and enjoy being outdoors.

Develop your garden to stimulate the five senses using colour, scent, texture and sound



Plan seasonal plants to keep colour in your garden all year round.



Include plants that attract the local bird life.



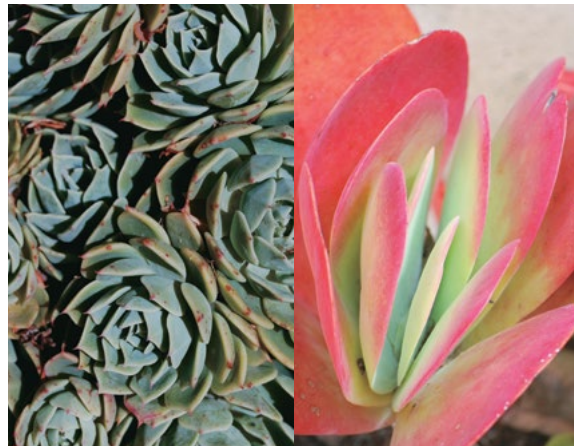
Enjoy a variety of colours and plants of different heights.



Grasses like these are lovely and soft to touch.



Choose contrasting colours for variety and visual stimulation.



Succulents have many shapes and colours. Ideal for hot climates, interesting to touch.



Jasmine and other plants provide aromatic benefits.



A water feature can be gentle and soothing.

Sensory planting list

Smell

Plumeria obtusa
Frangipani
* Sticky sap is poisonous

Aloysia triphylla
Lemon verbena

Lavandula angustifolia
English lavender

Pelargonium graveolens
Scented rose geranium

Jasminum officinale
Common white jasmine

Touch

Dracaena draco
Dragon tree
* Low toxic

Carex albescens
Frosted Curls

Senecio mandraliscae
Blue Fingers /
Blue Chalk Sticks
* Toxic to animals

Phormium tenax
New Zealand flax

Hylotelephium spectabile
Showy stonecrop

Sound

Ficinia nodosa
Knobby club rush

Calamagrostis acutiflora
Arctic reedgrass

Pennisetum alopecuroides
Fountain grass

Pennisetum alopecuroides
Nafray

Miscanthus sinensis 'Gracillimus'
Maiden grass

Taste

Mentha
Mint

Coriandrum sativum
Coriander

Citrus limon
Lemon tree

Rosmarinus officinalis
Rosemary

Lycopersicon esculentum
Tomato

Vision

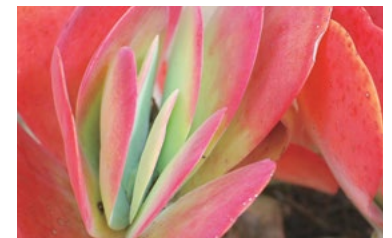
Lampranthus aurantiacus
Trailing Ice Plant

Cordyline terminalis
Red Sister

Kalanchoe thyrsiflora
Flapjacks

Thornless roses
Smooth Buttercup
(Yellow)

Zepherine Drouhin
(Red climber)



The garden shed

Identify hazards and reduce risks to promote safe walking in the garden and support enjoyment working in the garden shed.

1. If identified as a hazard for the person, remove chemicals, pesticides and electrical items
2. Ensure the shed is easily accessible and items such as a broom and rake are within easy reach
3. If possible, provide ample shade and seating in or outside the shed, and keep a sun hat handy
4. Storage containers with labels for easy identification.



Keep the interior tidy, and walk areas free of clutter.



Use shelving to keep items used daily within easy reach.



Keep a table to put things on and a chair for comfort. If there is no shade, it's a good idea to keep a sun hat close by.



Storage: Labelling helps a person to find things easily.

Dementia Partnership Project

The Dementia Partnership Project is an initiative between the Commonwealth Home Support Program and Alzheimer's WA. The Dementia Partnership Project aims to work in partnership with community service providers to enhance the lives of people living with dementia by building capacity within the community care sector.

For more information

Visit our website: dementiapartnership.com.au
or email us at: dpp@alzheimerswa.org.au

Supported by



Australian Government
Department of Health

Useful websites and resources

Dementia Enabling Environments
enablingenvironments.com.au

Dementia Services Development Centre
University of Stirling UK
dementia.stir.ac.uk/virtualhome

This Caring Home - Home Safety
thiscaringhome.org/home-safety-for-seniors

Gardens that Care
designwell.net.au

Indigo (formerly Independent Living Centre)
Tel: 1300 885 886
indigosolutions.org.au

Alzheimer's WA
Tel: 1300 66 77 88
alzheimerswa.org.au

Project Funding and Support

Alzheimer's WA, in partnership with the NSW Dementia Training Study Centre at the University of Wollongong, was funded in 2012 to develop a national project that focussed on translating research into practice in the area of enabling environments for people with dementia.

The initial Dementia Enabling Environments project was funded by the National Quality Dementia Care Initiative, which included dementia experts from the University of Tasmania, the Dementia Collaborative Research Centre (QUT) and Curtin University's Centre for Research on Ageing.

The National Quality Dementia Care Initiative funded by the J.O. & J.R. Wicking Trust and BUPA Care Services and was administered by Dementia Australia.

Alzheimer's WA would like to thank Dementia Training Australia and SPH Architecture + Interiors for their support in developing the hospital environment resources.

Who was involved?

The project involved the following representatives:

- » Jason Burton, Alzheimer's WA
- » Professor Richard Fleming, NSW/ACT Dementia Training Study Centre, University of Wollongong
- » Professor Roger Fay, University of Tasmania
- » Professor Elizabeth Beattie, QUT, Dementia Collaborative Research Centre
- » Professor Barbara Horner, Curtin University, Centre for Research on Ageing
- » Brian Kidd and Kirsty Bennett, dementia specialist architects
- » Tara Graham Cochrane, dementia landscape specialist
- » Tara Quirke, consumer representative

The range of initiatives included:

- » Environmental audit tools for care settings
- » Course materials for architecture university students
- » Workshops for professionals and families
- » A national library lending resource
- » A virtual web-based centre of information and advice
- » Advocacy for the adoption of good practice dementia design principles

Dementia Enabling Environments would like to thank the following for their support:

- » James Foley for the illustrations.
For more information visit jamesfoley.com.au
- » de Fiddes Design for select furniture images.
For more information visit dfdesign.com.au
- » Dementia Training Australia
- » The University of Wollongong

Home enabling check list

	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
Does the person with dementia have visual perception difficulties?				
Does the carer or person with dementia have a vision loss?				
Does the carer or person with dementia have a hearing loss?				
Does the carer or person with dementia have a physical disability?				

Entrances and exits

	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
Are the pathways in good condition (no pavers lifting, no uneven areas or loose gravel)				
If there are steps:				
» Are they level and clear of garden leaves/loose stones				
» Is the lighting even and bright in the day and night?				
» Is a hand rail required to reduce falls risk?				
» Do they have good visibility from top step to bottom?				
Are the security doors in good condition?				
Is there security access for the home e.g. Key Safe to keep spare house keys?				
Is the mail box lockable and easily accessible from the front door?				
Is the driveway steep, requiring a hand rail to navigate?				
Is the house number clearly visible?				

Additional Comments	

Kitchen

Safety	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
Is it necessary to have an isolation switch on the main power board?				
Is an electrical/gas safety cut off device required for the stove/oven?				
Is a plug-in gas alarm, gas detector/cut off device required?				
Are the saucepans and handles in good condition (no wobbly handles)?				
Do the electrical cords, outlets, switches need to be repaired or are they overloaded?				
Is the hot water temperature thermostat controlled?				
Is a flood detector/pressure release plug required for the kitchen sink?				
Are there any broken floor tiles, frayed vinyl or raised floor covering?				
Is there adequate space to perform tasks in the kitchen?				
Is there clutter on the work bench? (Remove or tidy, make it easier to find things)				
Is it easy to locate items within the cupboards? (Consider glass doors, labels, signs on see-through containers)				
Are the cupboard handles easy to identify and use? (D shaped handles)				
Are expiry date labels on food regularly checked? (check and throw out expired food items)				
Is there sufficient lighting and space to perform tasks?				
Are there light globes that are not working?				
Is there a wireless smoke detector (not directly placed in kitchen but close by)?				
Does the microwave have clear simple buttons for operation?				
Do you require any assistance with using your kettle? (A kettle cradle may assist to reduce scalds and spills)				
Are there any uneven surfaces?				
Design	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
Are regular items in line of sight or commonly used items grouped together?				
Are labels on containers or clear canisters used to help locate items?				
Are labels used on cupboards doors or drawers to easily identify items?				
Are appliances that are not working replaced with ones of similar design?				
Are items such as a whiteboard or a calendar clock used for orientation and important reminders?				
Are there taps that are familiar and easy for the person to use?				

Bathroom

Safety	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
Does the floor have a slope to the drain outlet?				
Is the floor slippery when wet or in general?				
Are there any loose or broken floor tiles?				
Are there mats or floor coverings which could be a trip hazard? (Check non slip backing)				
Are there heat lamps to keep the bathroom warm?				
Are the shower products and regularly used items within easy reach?				
Is a handrail required for safety around the shower or toilet? (Occupational therapist can assist)				
Is the toilet an appropriate height for the person?				
Can they reach the toilet paper easily?				
Is there easy access into the shower?				
If required, is there room for a shower chair/stool?				
Is there an exhaust fan? (Steam/condensation can make the floor slippery)				
Is the lighting adequate to perform tasks in the bathroom?				
Is there adequate room to manoeuvre equipment within the bathroom?				
Design	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
Are warmer colour tones used on the floor and walls?				
Is the room temperature comfortable for the person?				
Are regularly used items grouped, within line of sight and at an accessible height?				
Are cold/hot indicators clearly identified on taps to reduce confusion?				
Is there colour contrast to highlight items such as hand rails, towels, door handle and toilet seat?				
Is the mirror causing distress because the person cannot identify themselves?				
Is there sensor lighting to provide effective orientation into the bathroom at night?				

Bedroom

Safety	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
Are the floor coverings intact? (No raised carpet or cracked boards)				
Is there adequate lighting in the bedroom to perform tasks?				
Is there a sensor light? (Useful in falls prevention and night time orientation)				
Are there mats, rugs or other items that could be a trip hazard?				
Can the temperature in the bedroom be adjusted?				
Can the person easily see where the toilet is or how to get there from the bedroom?				
Are electrical cords a trip hazard or falls risk?				
Do they have an electric blanket? If yes, has it had a safety check by the electrician? Could the blanket be a risk to those who have incontinence?				
Is there adequate space to perform tasks in the bedroom free from clutter?				
Is the bed the correct height? Is there a risk of falling?				
Are clothes and footwear easily accessible?				
Are there any sharp or protruding furniture edges that may cause injury? If so have you considered furniture guards?				
Are there trees that cast shadows on your bedroom windows? Have you considered blackout curtains?				
Design	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
Is there colour contrast for walls, furnishings and bedding?				
Are labels used to identify items in drawers and cupboards (if necessary)?				
Are a selection of daily clothing and shoes displayed on a stand for easy access, promoting decision making?				

Lounge and living area

Safety	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
Do chairs have arm rests (to assist with transfers within the chair)?				
Are the chairs at the appropriate height for the person (falls risk concerns)?				
Are there curtains and blinds to block out sun and glare when present?				
Is there sufficient lighting with high watt globes and natural light?				
Can the person use the television remote? Does it have large buttons?				
Are there sharp or protruding edges on furniture or glass table tops that may cause injury?				
Can the person easily and quickly get to the toilet?				
Are there any rugs or mats on the floor?				
Is the lounge room free from clutter so activities can be carried out?				
Design	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
Is there an opportunity for a quiet place to sit, relax and read?				
Is there access in the room to perform meaningful activities?				
Are there personal photos and items around the room to provide for reminiscence?				
Are there different textures and colours in the living room to provide sensory engagement, e.g. knitted rugs, soft cushions?				
Is there colour contrast to floor, walls and furnishing for visual identification?				
Is there enough storage for items to ensure there is sufficient space to move around?				

Additional Comments	

Garden and shed

Safety	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
Is there a level pathway/walk area?				
Are the garden paths clear of loose stones, garden litter and rubble?				
Are there overhanging tree branches and shrubs along the pathway?				
Are garden tools easy to access and within reach?				
Is there a table/bench and chair for the person to work?				
Design	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
Is there a mixture of seasonal and all year round flowering plants?				
Is there a vegetable or herb garden present? Raised garden beds?				
Is there a water feature or bird feeder/bath that could attract birds into the garden?				
Does the outdoor area enable a range of activities to be performed?				
Is there a shaded area for the person to sit and relax?				
Are there features in the garden that evoke memories or promote reminiscence?				

Hazards

Have you identified hazards	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
Are chemicals, pesticides and sprays kept in safe lockable place?				
Can electrical equipment, sharp tools and machinery be used safely by the person?				
Are there poisonous plants which may need to be removed?				
Alcohol, medications and chemicals	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
Is there a lockable cabinet/safe storage for alcohol?				
Is there a lockable cabinet/safe storage for medications?				
Is a medication dispenser required?				
Is a medication reminder required?				
Is there a lockable cabinet for safe chemical storage?				
Other hazards identified	Yes	No	N/A	Comments





About Alzheimer's WA

Established in 1982, Alzheimer's WA provides direct care, support, education and information to assist people living with dementia as well as their families and carers.

As the dementia experts, Alzheimer's WA works with those living with dementia and the organisations that care and support them, to have the greatest beneficial impact on their dementia journey.

Our services, advocacy, training and consultancy programs are based on a philosophy of understanding the lived experience of dementia. People living with dementia guide us, through all that we do.

Alzheimer's WA also works in partnership with community, aged, health and disability providers. Our capacity-building model brings our dementia expertise to support the development of services and environments through training, consultancy and client service brokerage.

Our vision is a world where people with dementia and their families are supported and valued on their dementia journey.

To find out more about our organisation, please contact us on **1300 66 77 88** or visit alzheimerswa.org.au






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the dementia care experts