



The Caregiver Club[®]

Welcome to The Caregiver Club's Dementia-Friendly Dining Program

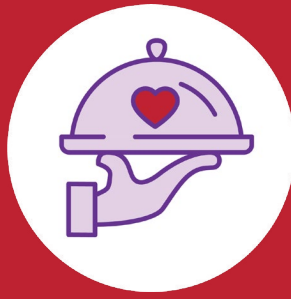
The Caregiver Club's Dementia-Friendly Dining program works to combat the societal stigmas associated with dementia. It partners with local restaurants in the St. Louis area to provide training and support so that they can provide a more friendly and supportive dining experience for those in the community.

Restaurants that receive Dementia-Friendly Certification:

- Support the relationship between individuals with dementia and their caregivers.
- Foster socialization has proven to support brain function.
- Give caregivers the courage to have more social dining experiences with their companion.



Cognitive ability declines **70% more slowly** in individuals with dementia who have frequent **social connections**.



For both individuals with dementia and their caregivers, **supportive social environments** can **reduce stress, combat anxiety and depression**, and **give them courage** to get back out into the community.

Your Role

As a host or hostess at a Dementia-Friendly dining establishment, you play a vital role in fulfilling the mission of this program.

You will be asked to assist with the following interactions:

- Taking dementia-friendly reservations (if offered)
- Greeting and seating



Successful Communication

Communicating with someone with dementia can be challenging because the disease affects their ability to process information, find the right words, understand complex conversations, and follow a logical train of thought. This makes it difficult for them to comprehend what is being said to them or to express themselves clearly. This can also be compounded by potential hearing or vision problems that often accompany the aging process.

Both what you say and how you say it are important.

When communicating with a person with dementia and their caregiver:

- 1 Acknowledge their situation.
- 2 Be patient, understanding and supportive.
- 3 Speak clearly, slowly, and in a friendly tone.
- 4 Follow the caregivers' directions, but acknowledge their companion's thoughts and ideas.
- 5 Do not judge their behaviors or choices.
- 6 Smile and maintain eye contact.
- 7 Be aware of your non-verbal communication.

DON'T TAKE IT PERSONALLY: Dementia is a disease that removes an individual's filter and affects their ability to communicate effectively. They may use insulting or embarrassing language, gibberish, nonsensical speech, or engage in rambling conversations. Try not to take offence to this behavior.



Taking a Reservation

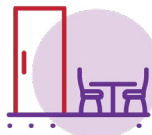
THE ISSUE: When a caregiver brings a companion with dementia to a restaurant that is unaware of their needs, the staff is often unprepared, making it challenging to provide dementia-friendly dining accommodations.

THE GOAL OF TAKING AN ORDER: To ensure the host, and ultimately the server is well-informed. Having a reservation can make all the difference in creating a positive dining experience for a guest living with dementia. With the proper awareness and questions, your restaurant can offer a welcoming environment that supports both the individual with dementia and the caregivers.

Here are best practices for taking a dementia-friendly dining reservation:

- Collect the name and information about the individual's specific needs.
 - Do they have a table location preference? (front of restaurant vs. a quiet corner)
 - Would they like a simple menu? (if your establishment offers a dementia-friendly option)
 - Do they have any accessibility challenges?
 - Do they have any dining or dietary restrictions?
 - How would they like the bill to be presented? (to caregiver or someone else)
 - Is there any other relevant information they would like to share?
- Share this information with the individual who will be serving the meal.
- Be straightforward about any requests that your establishment may or may not be able to fulfill.
- If your establishment does not take reservations, consider developing a process for gathering this information quickly upon arrival.
- Encourage the caregivers to present a Caregiver Card when they arrive.

Initially, asking these questions may feel intrusive, however, they demonstrate to the caregiver that your establishment understands the challenges of their situation.





Dementia-Friendly Dining Intakes Sheets

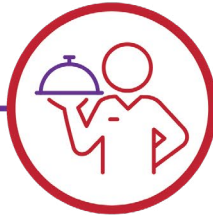
Your restaurant may use The Caregiver Club's Dementia-Friendly Dining Intakes sheets for taking a reservation OR your restaurant may develop their own process for gathering this information.



Be on the lookout for Caregiver Cards!

Caregiver cards allow caregivers to explain their unique situation without having to discuss it aloud with a host/hostess or server. The act of discretely sharing this card upon arrival is meant to instantly facilitate patience and understanding.

I am caring for someone with
Dementia / Alzheimer's.
We appreciate your
patience & kindness. 



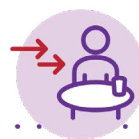
Greeting and Seating

THE ISSUE: When an individual with dementia arrives at a restaurant the process of standing by the host/hostess station and waiting to be seated can be chaotic.

THE GOAL OF SERVING THE MEAL: To confirm the individual's dining needs with the caregiver, get them seated at their table as soon as possible, and inform all designated staff of any specific accommodations.

Here are best practices for greeting and seating:

- Quickly confirming any specific accommodations with the caregiver, such as table location, menu preference, and restrictions.
- Seat them as quickly as possible.
- If they do not have a reservation, select an available table that meets as many dementia-friendly criteria as possible, for example, one that is quiet and well-lit, and ask if “*this area is ok*” before seating.
- Provide their server with any relevant information.



Dementia-Friendly Restaurant Features

As a part of implementing The Caregiver Club's Dementia-Friendly Dining Program, your establishment may address any of the following restaurant features. Discuss with your management which dementia-friendly features your establishment will offer.



1. QUIET & CALM ENVIRONMENT

ISSUE: Music, background noise, and echoes can be very distracting for an individual with dementia.

GOAL: Provide a calm, comfortable, and quiet environment, with minimal background noise.



2. GOOD LIGHTING

ISSUE: Poor lighting and shadows can make it difficult for an individual with memory loss to see and can lead to confusion.

GOAL: Provide ample lighting and avoid glare and shadows.



3. TABLE LOCATION

ISSUE: Tables in the middle of a crowded restaurant can be problematic for individuals with dementia.

GOAL: Prioritize dementia-friendly dining in supportive locations.



4. SIMPLE TABLE SET-UP

ISSUE: Traditional table settings, with multiple utensils, plates, and glasses, can be a source of confusion for individuals with dementia.

GOAL: Prioritize simplicity and keep tables clutter-free.



5. SIMPLE MENU

ISSUE: Elaborate or complicated menus can present challenges for individuals with memory loss and their caregivers.

GOAL: Provide an optional, simplified menu.



6. SPECIFIC HOURS OF SERVICE

ISSUE: A crowded restaurant can be overstimulating for a person with memory loss.

GOAL: Offer dementia-friendly dining during off-peak times when the restaurant is less-crowded.



7. EASY ACCESSIBILITY

ISSUE: Physical access in and around the restaurant can be challenging for individuals with memory-loss and their caregiver.

GOAL: Provide easy access to the restaurant itself, the table, and the bathroom facilities.



Thank You for Your Support and Participation

When implementing The Caregiver Club's Dementia-Friendly Dining Program, it is important to recognize that individuals with memory loss have varying symptoms, progression rates, and personal challenges. Therefore, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to providing a positive dementia-friendly dining experience.

While the personal interactions outlined in training are designed to address and support common challenges associated with dementia and memory loss, individual needs and preferences will vary.

Good luck and we thank you for participating in our mission.



For more information, visit: thecaregiverclub.org