Environmental Checklist

Does Your Library Provide:

Accessibility & Navigation

- [ ] Self-opening doors for easy entry
- [ ] Wide aisles and clear pathways for mobility
- [ ] Stable shelving and clear sightlines to entrances and service desks

Clear Signage

- [ ] Large-print signage at eye level
- [ ] High-contrast signs with simple words and familiar icons
- [ ] Color-coded zones or “You Are Here” maps for wayfinding
- [ ] Clear labeling of genre sections and service desks

Lighting & Flooring

- [ ] Bright, even lighting throughout the library
- [ ] Non-glare, matte finish floors (avoid shiny or patterned surfaces)
- [ ] High-contrast markings on stairs and ramps
- [ ] Reduce glare and shadows for safer navigation

Supportive Spaces and Seating

- [ ] Sturdy chairs with armrests in reading areas and near entrances
- [ ] Designated quiet spaces for reduced stimulation
- [ ] Family restroom with grab bars for care partner assistance
- [ ] Accessible seating near circulation desks for visibility

Staff Support & Assistance

- [ ] Easy ways to get help from staff (visible desks, proactive greetings)
- [ ] Staff wearing large, readable name badges or lanyards

Community Programming Checklist

Does Your Library:

- [ ] Partner with at least one aging-services or dementia-support organization
- [ ] Maintain up-to-date referral information for older adults and family caregivers
- [ ] Offer or host educational programs on brain health, dementia, and/or caregiving
- [ ] Provide space for family caregiver or early-stage support groups
- [ ] Host or support memory café-style social gatherings
- [ ] Share information about or host evidence-based programs
- [ ] Promote dementia and caregiving awareness during key health observance months

Dementia-Friendly Note:

Strong partnerships allow libraries to expand community education and impact without assuming or providing clinical responsibility.

Resources Checklist

Does Your Library Provide:

- [ ] Dementia-friendly books and print materials (highly illustrated books, short simple read-aloud storybooks)
- [ ] Memory or activity kits
- [ ] Music or multimedia resources
- [ ] Exercise DVDs or simple games
- [ ] Care partner educational materials
- [ ] Materials that support caregiver self-care
- [ ] Brain health educational resources
- [ ] Awareness month displays
- [ ] Accessible referral information for community supports

Dementia-Friendly Note:

Visible, well-placed resources can prompt early help-seeking and reduce uncertainty for families who may not know where to begin.

Training Readiness Checklist

Does Your Library:

- [ ] Provide basic dementia-awareness education for staff?
- [ ] Train staff in communication best practices?
- [ ] Offer guidance and have a policy for responding to wandering or distress?
- [ ] Identify local partners for consultation or referral?
- [ ] Provide refresher training opportunities?
- [ ] Encourage documentation practices when appropriate?

Dementia-Friendly Note:

Dementia-friendly service is not a single initiative. It is an ongoing commitment to staff awareness. Understanding dementia helps us respond with greater confidence, compassion, and support.

Seating & Rest Areas Tip Sheet

People living with dementia may tire easily and need safe, stable seating options. Rest areas support calmer library visits.

Sturdy Chairs

Provide sturdy chairs with armrests in reading areas, near entrances, and along pathways to support balance and stability.

Family Restrooms

Offer family restrooms with grab bars for care partners assisting patrons.

Quiet Zones

Include quiet zones for those who need a calm environment and to prevent overstimulation.

Dementia-Friendly Note:

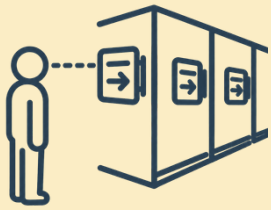
Inspect seating areas regularly for clutter, blocked paths, or shifted furniture.

Descriptive Signage Tip Sheet

People living with dementia often experience confusion and difficulty knowing where to go. Clear, consistent signage reduces stress and promotes independence.

Large Print

Use large-print, high-contrast signs with simple words and familiar icons (e.g., restrooms, exits, check-out).



Eye-Level Signs

Place signs at eye level and ensure consistency throughout the building.

You Are Here

Include “You Are Here” maps and color-coded zones for easy navigation.

Dementia-Friendly Note:

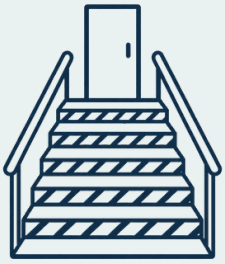
Review signs regularly so they remain accurate, visible, high contrast, and easy to understand.

Lighting & Flooring Tip Sheet

Glare, shadows, and patterned floors can cause disorientation and increase fall risk. Bright, even lighting and safe flooring help patrons move with confidence.

Even Lighting

Maintain bright, even lighting throughout the library, especially in hallways and restrooms.



Mark Stairs and Ramps

Mark stairs and ramps with high-contrast tape or paint.

Slip-resistant Floors

Use matte finishes on slip-resistant floors.

Dementia-Friendly Note:

Walk the library at different times of day to identify glare, shadows, and uneven lighting.

Accessibility & Navigation Tip Sheet

People living with dementia often experience mobility challenges and may feel anxious in crowded or cluttered spaces. Easy access and clear navigation reduce stress and support independence.

Self-Opening Doors

Install self-opening doors for effortless entry and exit.

Remove Hazards

Avoid obstacles or furniture that could cause confusion or hazards.

Wide Aisles

Maintain wide aisles and uncluttered pathways for safe movement.

Supports & Handrails

Install grab bars in bathrooms and handrails on staircases.

Clear Sightlines

Use stable shelving and keep sightlines clear to entrances and service desks.

Outdoor Access

Assess entrances and sidewalks for fall hazards such as uneven concrete.

Dementia-Friendly Note:

Regularly assess routes in and around the library so they remain clear, safe, and easy to follow.

Staff Support & Assistance Tip Sheet

A dementia-friendly environment is not only about physical design. Staff should be approachable, visible, and easy to identify.

Visible Staff

Ensure staff visibility with large, readable name badges or lanyards.

Staff Training

Train staff in dementia awareness so they can respond with patience and empathy.

Clear Assistance

Provide easy ways to get help, such as clearly marked service desks and proactive greetings.

Help Points

Consider help points or call buttons in larger libraries for quick assistance.

Dementia-Friendly Note:

Keep support visible, approachable, and consistent across the library.

Dementia-Friendly Communication

Communication Tips

What is Dementia?

Dementia is a group of neurological conditions that affect memory, thinking, communication, and daily functioning. Alzheimer's disease is the most common type. Dementia is not a normal part of aging.

Your Communication Checklist

Individuals living with dementia may experience changes in memory, processing speed, communication, and sensory interpretation. Clear, supportive communication is the most effective tool for reducing confusion and promoting positive outcomes.

- ✔ Identify yourself and explain you are there to help
- ✔ Use the person's preferred name
- ✔ Make eye contact at their level
- ✔ Speak slowly using short, simple sentences
- ✔ Ask one question at a time
- ✔ Allow extra time for responses
- ✔ Use calm tone and reassuring body language
- ✔ Show empathy—do not argue or correct
- ✔ Use visual cues, gestures, or write things down if helpful

Dementia can impact how patrons interact with library staff, spaces, and technology.

Dementia-Friendly Note:

Emotions are contagious. A calm, patient presence supports safety and cooperation.

Community Partnerships & Supports

Our Local Resources

Partnering with local organizations helps support programming, staff training, and patron referrals for individuals living with dementia and their care partners.

Area Agency on Aging (AAA):

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Memory Disorder Clinic:

_____

_____

Alzheimer's Association / Dementia Support Nonprofit:

_____

_____

Healthcare or Geriatrics Providers:

_____

_____

Faith-based or Community Organizations:

_____

_____

Other Local Resources:

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_____

How To Use Partnerships

- ✔ Host and/or support dementia-friendly programs (presentations, memory cafés, support groups)
- ✔ Provide referrals for patrons and family care partners
- ✔ Staff training and dementia sensitivity education
- ✔ Obtain community and educational resources for displays

National and Statewide Contacts

Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline
800-272-3900

Elder Helpline
800-963-5337