



**Australian Government**

Aged Care Quality and  
Safety Commission



# Partnering with People Living with Dementia

Flip Guides have been designed as supplementary supports for the learning modules. The Guides include key messages and insights for your continued reflection.

# Need to Know: Partnering with People Living with Dementia

As Australia's ageing population continues to grow, there has also been an increase in the number of Australians living with dementia. In 2022, there were an estimated 487,500 Australians living with dementia. Without a medical breakthrough, the number of people with dementia is expected to increase to 1,076,000 by 2058.

According to Dementia Australia, dementia has been called the second leading cause of death for Australians, and the leading cause of death for women. Dementia comes in many forms.

As outlined in the Placing Older Australian's at the Centre of Care module, governing bodies and executives need to be focused on delivering safe, quality care to all consumers. Additionally, 68% of aged care residents have moderate to severe cognitive impairment, highlighting the need for providers to ensure delivery of dementia care is consumer-centred and of the highest quality.



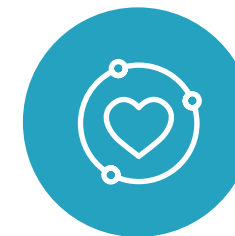
Workforce and  
organisational  
development



Inclusive  
physical  
and social  
environments



Meaningful  
engagement  
and partnership  
in care delivery



An empathetic  
approach

You can view the [Obligations and Accountabilities](#) module for more information on the obligations and accountabilities of all providers or the [Consumers at the Centre of Care](#) module for more information on delivering consumer-centred care.

# Best Practice Partnering with people living with dementia

An essential aspect of improving dementia care is ensuring that quality dementia care forms part of an aged care provider's core business. It's readily known that aligning operating and service models design to care recipients provides better outcomes.

The following three elements should be considered by governing bodies and executives when looking to improve the delivery of care for people living with dementia.

Take a moment to read through a summary of each element on the following pages.



# Best Practice Partnering with people living with dementia (continued)



## 01 Capability:

There are two capability elements essential to the delivery of best practice dementia care

### Workforce

Staff at all levels of an organisation should be educated and trained in key aspects of dementia care, including:

- Person-centred care
- The fundamentals of caring for people with dementia
- Psychosocial approaches to addressing consumer needs
- Behaviour and clinical management.

## Leadership

Governing bodies and executives should:

- Promote a positive culture around ongoing learning in the workplace
- Develop and fund education and career pathways to enable their workforce to better deliver care to people with dementia.

# Best Practice Partnering with people living with dementia (continued)



## 02 Environmental Considerations:

What are environmental considerations?:

- The environment we are surrounded by in our daily lives gives us resources for presenting ourselves to the world around us. While people with dementia may have an altered perception of time and space, they remain in a world where relationships, objects and situations matter.

What are best practice design principles?

- The experience of a person living with dementia should frame the design of residential and respite facilities. This involves seeing the world through the eyes of people living with dementia. To be dementia-friendly, facilities need to:

- Be more like a home-like environment
- Provide lower-density congregate living, as large, noisy institutional environments can worsen the adverse consequences of dementia.
- By incorporating best practice design principles, consumers with dementia can experience environments in a way that builds confidence and independence and create a sense of security.
- View the [Designing for people with dementia](#) resource from the Department of Health Victoria for more information on best practice design for dementia.

# Best Practice Partnering with people living with dementia (continued)

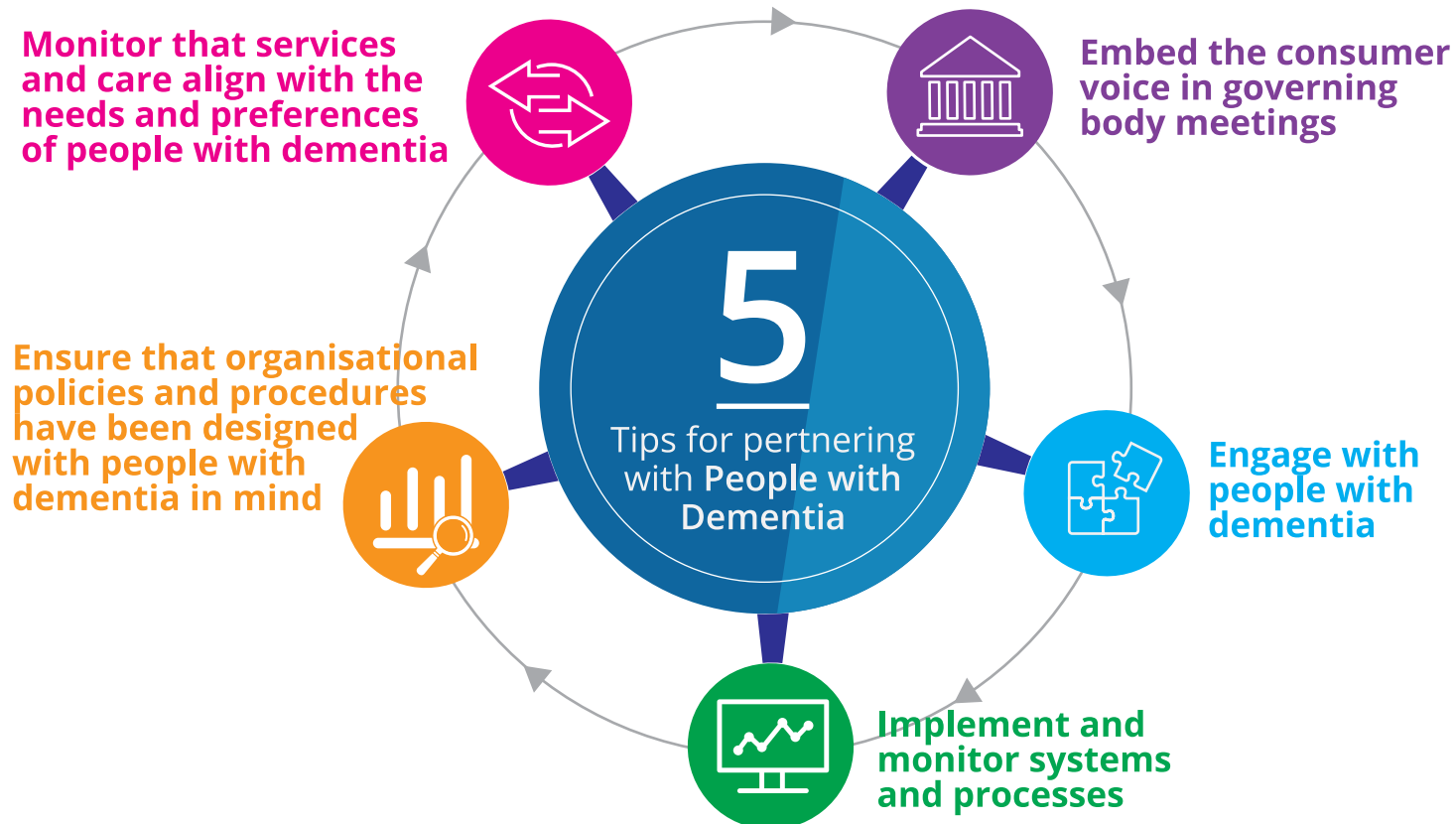


## Organisational Culture:

- Delivering safe, quality and inclusive care
  - As a governing body member, it is your responsibility to lead an organisational culture that focuses on partnering with consumers living with dementia and their representatives.
- Partnership in care
  - The engagement of consumers in partnerships is most successful when the principles of partnerships and consumer-centred care are embedded within the organisation's culture.
  - View the [Partnering with Consumers Standards](#) for more information on creating partnerships in care.
- Minimising the use of restrictive practices for people living with dementia
  - Restrictive practices are often used on people living with dementia, particularly in residential aged care facilities. It is the responsibility of the governing body to ensure the minimisation of restrictive practices across an organisation by:
    - Ensuring the workforce is appropriately skilled and has a clear understanding of the clinical aspects of dementia and the disease trajectory
    - Providing a holistic, consumer-centred approach, which includes high quality communication and empathy.
  - View the [Minimising the use of restrictive practices](#) resource for more information.

# Tips for Partnering with People Living with Dementia

→ Read the tips on the below headings on the following pages.



# Tips for Partnering with People Living with Dementia (continued)

## Embed the consumer voice in governing body meetings



- Invite representatives for and / or people with dementia to assist in setting the agenda for a governing body meeting.
- Establishing a consumer reference group or sub committee, including (if possible) consumers living with dementia, or their representatives.
- Engage in strategic planning sessions that are focused solely on improving outcomes for consumers with dementia.

## Engage with people with dementia

Ask questions and obtain assurance from management as to how people with dementia and their representatives are engaged and embedded in decision making regarding all aspects of their care and service, including:

- Understanding the steps management take to embed the voice of people with dementia in day to day activities and where changes may be needed.
- Determine how the needs of people with dementia can be better included in operational design.
- Develop a workplace plan to

increase the workforce's understanding of partnering with people with dementia and how to better deliver safe and high quality care.



- Understanding how management encourages the workforce at all levels to improve care for those with people with dementia.
- Continually engage with consumers and their representatives to monitor and evaluate the quality of they are receiving. Information gathered can be used to inform continuous improvement activities and ensure the voice of people with dementia is kept at the centre of activities.



# Tips for Partnering with People Living with Dementia (continued)

## Implement and monitor systems and processes

Ask questions and obtain assurances from management as to the relevant systems and processes in place to support better practice care for people with dementia, including:

- Providing education and training for the workforce to promote learning and skills development,

care, understanding and empathy for people with dementia.



- Embedding a culture that enables continuous learning and improvement based off on feedback and complaints.
- A clear and consistent approach to monitoring and actioning feedback from consumers.

## Ensure that organisational policies and procedures have been designed with people with dementia in mind



- Regularly table and review key organisational documents, such as commitment statements, strategic plans, and policies, in governing body meetings to ensure that the requirements of people with dementia are kept front of mind.



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# Tips for Partnering with People Living with Dementia (continued)

## Monitor that services and care align with the needs and preferences of people with dementia

- Ask questions and obtain assurance from management as to how the services and care provided in the organisation align with the needs and preferences of people with dementia.
- Actively review trends in relation to feedback, complaints and experience, and use this information to inform decision making and to identify where improvements in care and service delivery can be made.



# Is your governing body effectively partnering with people living with dementia?

Does this apply in your organisation? What actions could be taken to ensure that the governing body and executives are making informed decisions that place people with dementia at their centre?

→ *Read through and consider each of the questions on the following pages*

# 01

Have you ever asked your governing body...



- Do we effectively embed the needs of people with dementia in our governing body discussions, and do these needs filter through into our strategic decisions and provider operations?
- Do we have the necessary knowledge to articulate the needs and preferences of people with dementia in our strategic conversations? If not, what processes can we put in place to ensure we are representing People with Dementia effectively?
- Does our provider effectively incorporate dementia-friendly design in our residential care?
- Do we have strategies in place to ensure the continued education and training of our workforce on dementia care?



# Is your governing body effectively partnering with people living with dementia? (continued)

## 02

Have you ever asked...



- Can our management outline how the needs and preferences of people with dementia are incorporated into the development, delivery and management of care and services?
- Can our management outline how operational practices have shifted to better support people with dementia?
- Are our staff comfortable that they have the necessary skills and capabilities to provide high quality care to people with dementia?
- Can our staff provide examples of how the organisation has changed their delivery of care and services based on the needs and preferences of people with dementia?

## Is your governing body effectively partnering with people living with dementia? (continued)

### 03

Does your organisation...



- Have records showing that the organisation has taken adequate steps to embed the needs and preferences of people with dementia into the development, delivery and evaluation of care and services?
- Have evidence showing groups responsible for directing the development and the redesign of projects have emphasised the needs and preferences of people with dementia?
- Have records of meetings, consultations or forums with people with dementia or their representatives reflected on issues important to their needs and preferences (e.g. restrictive practices, quality of life and daily activities, arrangement of service environments)?
- Have evidence and examples of how the organisation shows, monitors and reports how it has improved its practices to better support people with dementia?



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# Additional Resources

