



# A PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH TO ALZHEIMER'S AND OTHER DEMENTIAS

**DEMENTIA CAPABLE SYSTEMS AND  
DEMENTIA FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES**



Emory Centers  
for Training and  
Technical Assistance



# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Define dementia capable system and dementia friendly community
- Explain how public health can contribute to dementia capable systems through support services/programs, workforce training, and dementia friendly communities
- List at least two services that may benefit a caregiver
- Identify at least three professions that would benefit from workforce training
- Describe at least two components of a dementia friendly community



# INTRODUCTION: DEMENTIA & ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE'

- Dementia is a decline in mental ability that interferes with daily life
- Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia
  - Progressive loss of memory and brain function
  - Requires increasing aid and assistance
  - No cure and limited treatment options
- Huge financial and emotional burden
- Public health plays important role in addressing Alzheimer's disease

# ALZHEIMER'S: A LARGER CONTEXT<sup>2</sup>

- States/communities play significant role
  - Assessing burden
  - Risk reduction
  - Care services: health care, support services, government agencies
  - Public and private resources: transportation, grocery stores, places of worship, financial institutions, law enforcement





# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS I



Imagine you or someone you care about has Alzheimer's or dementia.

What might be some of your concerns or fears about going out in your community?

How could those be addressed at a community level?



## TWO FRAMEWORKS: DEMENTIA CAPABLE SYSTEM AND DEMENTIA FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES<sup>3</sup>

- Designed to meet the needs of older adults within a community
- Aim to help older adults remain independent and in the community as long as possible
- Bring together community members and key stakeholders to focus on accommodations, provide support, and improve quality of life for older adults



# DEMENTIA FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES<sup>4,5</sup>

- Health care, community services, resources
- Safe and accessible
  - Transportation
  - Mobility
- Respectful and supportive
- Public education and workforce training
- Technology
  - GPS, GIS
  - Registry



# DEMENTIA CAPABLE SYSTEMS<sup>6,7</sup>

- Accommodate needs of population with:
  - Memory loss
  - Physical, cognitive, and/or behavioral symptoms
  - Co-morbidities
- Knowledgeable workforce/residents:
  - Identify people with dementia
  - Work effectively with them
  - Inform/refer to services





# DEMENTIA CAPABLE: PUBLIC HEALTH<sup>8</sup>

- Analyzing community support needs
- Building connections to support services and programs
- Providing workforce training
- Establishing dementia friendly communities





# DEMENTIA CAPABLE: PUBLIC HEALTH (CONTINUED)<sup>9,10</sup>

- Use data to inform the public health program and policy response to:
  - Cognitive health
  - Cognitive impairment
  - Caregiving
- Evaluate training and programs
- Estimate gap between workforce capacity and demand for services



# SUPPORT SERVICES & PROGRAMS

DEMENTIA CAPABLE SYSTEMS AND DEMENTIA FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES





## DISCUSSION QUESTION 2



What kinds of support services might people with Alzheimer's and their caregivers need?

# SUPPORT SERVICES:ALZHEIMER'S<sup>11,12</sup>

- Support groups
- Wellness programs
- Care services, including in-home care
- Legal and financial services
- Residential care
- Transportation
- Adult day care





# EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAMS<sup>13,14</sup>

- Reducing Disability in Alzheimer's Disease (RDAD) – University of Washington
  - Focus: teach family caregivers strategies
- Minds in Motion (MIM)
  - Focus: improve function in early stages with mild cognitive impairment
- Sharing History through Active Reminiscence and Photo – imagery (SHARP) – Oregon Health & Science University
  - Focus: neighborhood walking groups to trigger memories and increase social engagement
- Skills2Care – Thomas Jefferson University
  - Focus: occupational therapy-based strategies for caregivers



## DISCUSSION QUESTION 3



What is the role of public health in connecting people to the services they need?

# PUBLIC HEALTH: SUPPORT SERVICES<sup>15</sup>

- Evidence-based programs and interventions
- Information and referrals
- Identify gaps in available support services
- Funding, space, expertise





# SUPPORT SERVICES: PARTNERSHIPS<sup>16</sup>

- Offices on Aging / Aging and Disability Resource Centers / Area Agencies on Aging
  - Education
  - Caregiver and safety assessments
  - Support programs
  - Resources
- Non-profit organizations
- Residential care facilities





# WORKFORCE TRAINING

DEMENTIA CAPABLE SYSTEMS AND DEMENTIA FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES



# WORKFORCE TRAINING OVERVIEW

- Health care
- Direct care
- Public health
- First responders
- Other support services:  
transportation, customer service,  
faith-based organizations





## DISCUSSION QUESTION 4



What training should health care and direct care professionals receive?

# WORKFORCE TRAINING: HEALTH CARE & DIRECT CARE<sup>17</sup>

- Basics of dementia
- Benefits of early diagnosis
- How to address physical, cognitive, emotional, behavioral symptoms
- Assisting caregivers
- Managing co-morbidities
- Use of validated assessment tools (health care)





## DISCUSSION QUESTION 5



What training should public health professionals receive?

# WORKFORCE TRAINING: PUBLIC HEALTH

- Alzheimer's as a public health priority
- Importance of early detection
- Cognitive health and risk reduction
- Types and availability of resources and supports
- Caregiver burden and needs
- Surveillance
- Health disparities
- Unique issues (stigma, abuse, advance planning)





## DISCUSSION QUESTION 6



What training should first responders receive?



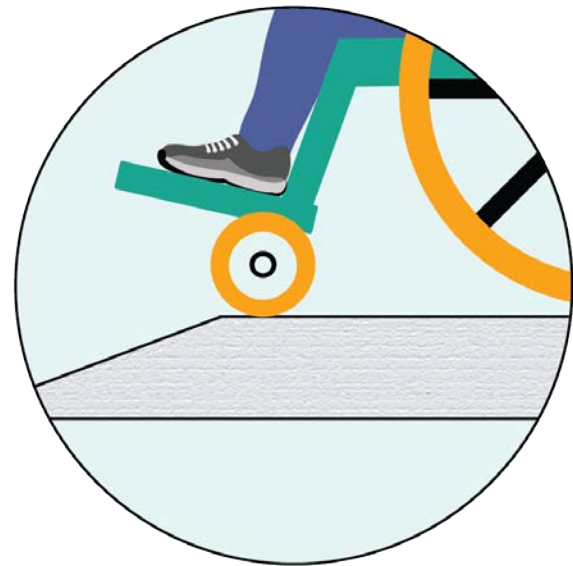
# WORKFORCE TRAINING: FIRST RESPONDERS

- Situations involving stress or fear
- Training needs:
  - Identifying Alzheimer's and dementia
  - Effective interaction/communication
  - Resources
  - Registries, technologies



# WORKFORCE TRAINING: OTHER PROFESSIONS

- Public transportation, customer service, faith/spiritual communities, etc.
  - Awareness
  - Recognizing need for help
  - Resources
  - Communication
  - Ways to assist and support





# CAREGIVER NEEDS AND SUPPORT

DEMENTIA CAPABLE SYSTEMS AND DEMENTIA FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES



# SUPPORT SERVICES: CAREGIVERS<sup>18,19</sup>

- Education/information/training
  - Alzheimer's/dementia
  - Behavioral management
  - Available resources
  - Self-care



# SUPPORT SERVICES: CAREGIVERS (CONTINUED)<sup>20,21</sup>

- Counseling/support groups
- Case management
- Respite services





# CONCLUSION: DEMENTIA CAPABLE AND DEMENTIA FRIENDLY

- States/communities play significant role
- Dementia capable systems and dementia friendly communities
  - Analyze community support needs
  - Support services and programs
  - Workforce training
  - Caregiver training and support



# FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information, please visit:

Alzheimer's Association website at <http://www.alz.org>

CDC's Alzheimer's Disease and Healthy Aging Program at  
<https://www.cdc.gov/aging/>





# COMPETENCIES

- **Academy for Gerontology in Higher Education (AGHE):**
  - I.6.7 Promote and apply the use of appropriate forms of evidence-based interventions and technologies for older adults, their families, and caregivers
  - II.4.5 Provide the following groups information and education in order to build a collaborative aging network:
    - Key persons in the community (police officers, firefighters, mail carriers, locale service providers, and others)
    - Aging workforce professionals and personnel (paid and unpaid; full-and part-time) in the field of aging
- **Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) Foundational Competencies:**
  - 2. Locate, use, evaluate, and synthesize public health information (bachelors level)
  - 4. Interpret results of data analysis for public health research, policy, or practice (masters level)
- **Council on Linkages Between Academia and Public Health Practice:**
  - 8A3. Describes the ways public health, health care, and other organizations can work together or individually to impact the health of a community
  - 8A4. Contributes to development of a vision for a healthy community (e.g., emphasis on prevention, health equity for all, excellence, and innovation)



# REFERENCES I

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<sup>13</sup>Alliance for Aging Research. (2012) *Translating Innovation to Impact: Evidence-based Interventions to Support People with Alzheimer's Disease and their Caregivers at Home and in the Community*.

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<sup>16</sup>ACT on Alzheimer's. (2014) *Alzheimer's Disease Curriculum, Module X: Caregiver Support*.

<sup>17</sup> Fazio, S., Pace, D., Flinner, J. & Kallmyer, B. (2018) The Fundamentals of Person-Centered Care for Individuals With Dementia. *The Gerontologist*, 58(1), S10–S19. <https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/gnx122>

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