



National  
Intellectual Disability  
Memory Service



**Supporting someone  
with intellectual disability  
and dementia**



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Remember  
that the  
person you  
know is still  
there

## Person-Centred Care

Enable the person to continue to make **choices** about their day.

Support the person to continue to be as **independent** as possible in their day.

Support the person to continue to enjoy their **normal activities**, maybe at a simpler level than before.

Focus on the person's **strengths** to work with them to build meaningful life pursuits.

**Listen** carefully to the person as they try to express themselves, whether verbally or through facial expressions or gestures.

Support the person in a way that promotes **respect and dignity** in their interactions with others.

# Staying Well

Support the person to take **regular exercise**.

A **healthy, balanced diet** is important to maintain a healthy weight.

Support the person to drink fluids regularly in order to **stay hydrated**.

Support the person to continue to keep their brain active with **mentally stimulating activities**.

Support the person to continue to have **social connections** with their family and friends and with their community.

**Good oral health** and **good foot health** are both important to maintain.

Support the person to maintain **good bone health** with adequate calcium intake and with weight-bearing exercises.

**Adequate rest and sleep** are important.

Support the person to engage in relaxing enjoyable activities as a way to **manage stress and mood**.

People can  
live well with  
dementia



# Daily Life

Support the person to continue to have **daily chores** and areas of responsibility in their day.

Support the person to continue to engage in **normal household activities**, even if they need extra support to undertake these.

Support the person to **remain as independent as possible** with their self-care skills, only increasing support to the level it is required.

Encourage the person to **spend time in the garden**, perhaps feeding the birds, watering plants or sowing seeds.

Support the person to continue to engage regularly with members of their **local community** and to visit their favourite community locations.

Use **photos and pictures** to help the person to remember their daily schedule.

Maintain the  
normal  
rhythm of  
daily life



# Communication and Relationships

Speak slowly and clearly to the person and maintain good eye contact with them.

Speak in simple sentences and give the person time to process the language and to respond to you.

Encourage everyone to be patient with the person as they try to remember and to communicate. The person may wish to engage in one topic of conversation frequently.

Create meaningful opportunities for natural conversations.

Enjoy being in the 'now' with the person.

Building good relationships is the key to good dementia care.

Support the person to engage in normal daily activities at a slower pace that suits their current level of functioning; don't rush them as this leads to extra stress for the person in their day.

Stay alert to the person's changing needs and change the level of supports you provide as required.

Care needs to be built on a strengths-based approach.

Maintain a familiar predictable daily routine for the person with photos or picture schedules to support them to predict their day.



Maintain social connections through technology

# Menu of Life-Enhancing Daily Pursuits

There are many simple yet meaningful activities you can undertake with a person with intellectual disability and dementia. These shared activities should be person-centred and based on what the person has previously enjoyed but can be undertaken at a simpler level than previously if needed.

Create opportunities to enjoy life!

**Activities need to be stress-free and failure-free**  
**Place the emphasis on enjoyment**



## Cultural

- Sporting Event
- Church
- Art Gallery
- Clubs
- Movie
- Concert
- Outings / Trips
- Learning / New Skills



## Physical

- Bowling
- Swimming
- Walking/Running
- Gardening
- Keeping Fit
- Dancing
- Pitch & Putt
- Golf
- Cycling



## Social

- Photography
- Conversation
- Sonas
- Music Session
- Reminiscence
- Shopping
- Canteen / Coffee Shop
- Visiting Family / Friends
- Celebrating Events



## Individual

- Snoezelen
- Art Therapy
- Television
- Beauty Therapy
- Hairdresser
- Massage
- Aromatherapy
- Reading
- Pet Therapy

You are only limited by your imagination!



Good  
dementia  
care is slow  
care

## Extra Supports Available

Always reach out and ask for the help you need. You can request extra supports when you need them from Community Health Services. Examples of professional supports available from community services include:

Professional	Supports Provided
<b>General Practitioner (GP)</b>	General health supports including epilepsy, incontinence, carer support.  Referrals to other professional supports.
<b>Clinical Nurse Specialist/Psychologist</b>	Managing the person's mood.  Managing the person's behaviour.  Helping with future planning, carer support.
<b>Psychiatrist</b>	Managing anti-dementia medication and mental health supports.
<b>Physiotherapist</b>	Maintaining appropriate exercise regimes (both cardiovascular and weight-bearing exercises).  Advice on preventing falls.
<b>Occupational Therapist</b>	Support with daily living activities  Support with assistive technology options
<b>Optician/Audiologist</b>	Regular checks for vision and hearing.
<b>Podiatrist/Chiropodist</b>	Maintaining good foot health.
<b>Dietician</b>	Maintaining a healthy diet as food likes and dislikes may change and the person may not be able to chew/swallow as well as previously.
<b>Speech and Language Therapist</b>	Advice on supporting communication as the person's ability to communicate changes.  Assessment of swallowing and advice on managing changes in swallowing ability.
<b>Dentist</b>	Maintaining good oral health.
<b>Local Palliative Care Team</b>	Support with planning compassionate end of life care and comfort

# Self-Care for the Carer

Every carer needs to invest in self-care. Here are some ideas for keeping yourself healthy and motivated to support someone with dementia.

Maintain a [healthy diet](#).

Get adequate [sleep](#) and rest.

Ask for help when you need a [break](#).

Request [professional support](#) where you need it.

Try to [stay active](#) as a way to reduce stress.

[Keep in touch](#) with family and friends.

Join a [local carer network](#) to get support from and to provide support to others.

Find out what [community supports](#) are available to you in your area, e.g. Dementia Cafés, Carers' Groups, Respite Breaks.

[Talk to your doctor](#) if you are feeling very stressed or tired.

[Plan ahead](#) for the supports the person living with dementia might need into the future.

And above all else, [please be kind to yourself](#). You're doing the best that you can.



You cannot  
pour from an  
empty cup

# National Intellectual Disability Memory Service Supports

The National Intellectual Disability Memory Service can support the person living with dementia and their carers.

We offer a number of post-diagnostic dementia supports, including:

- Review of Dementia Medications
- Support with behavioural and psychological symptoms of dementia
- Advice on changing support needs as a person progresses through dementia
- Training and education for carers in post-diagnostic dementia supports
- Advice on planning ahead for future support needs and end of life care

A referral from your doctor to access these services is required, using the NIDMS referral form. This referral form is available on the NIDMS website at [www.tcd.ie/tcaid/research/NIDMS](http://www.tcd.ie/tcaid/research/NIDMS)

For further information, contact the NIDMS clinic in Tallaght University Hospital at 01-4142577



# Other Supports

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland is a national non-profit organisation offering advice and support for people living with dementia in Ireland and their families and other carers.

The Society has a branch network throughout Ireland and offers supports such as Dementia Advisors, Social Clubs, Day and Home Care Support Services, Respite Care and Alzheimer's Cafes around the country.

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland has some more tips on self-care and support here:

<https://alzheimer.ie/living-with-dementia/i-am-a-carer-family-member/looking-after-yourself/>

They also offer an online support group and online carer training courses:

<https://alzheimer.ie/about-dementia/family-carer-training/>

The Alzheimer Society of Ireland's National Helpline number is 1800 341 341



Other useful support websites are:

Family Carers Ireland [www.familycarers.ie](http://www.familycarers.ie)

Citizen's Information Services  
<https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/>

HSE Understand Together  
<https://www.understandtogether.ie> also has links to local supports

Down Syndrome Ireland  
<https://downsyndrome.ie> also has local support branches



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Memory Service



**Trinity College Dublin**  
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath  
The University of Dublin



**Tallaght  
University  
Hospital**

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**Daughters of Charity**  
Disability Support Services

With the support of



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National  
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