

Moving Forward, Together: Creating Dementia Supportive Communities the Right Way

Guidance for Supervisors and Leaders

Dementia Supportive Communities are strongest when they are shaped **with** people living with dementia and their care partners, not just **for** them. People with lived experience bring unique insight into what feels welcoming, what creates barriers, and what truly makes a difference in daily life.

Leaders play a key role in creating the conditions for meaningful engagement to happen consistently and ethically.

- Create formal and informal opportunities for people living with dementia to share input
 - Hold focused feedback sessions or listening sessions
 - Create welcoming spaces where people feel comfortable offering feedback spontaneously, without needing to “sign up” or prepare
- Involve people living with dementia and care partners in planning, testing, or reviewing programs and spaces
 - Invite people living with dementia to participate in planning activities
 - Include people living with dementia in pilot testing or walk-throughs of new spaces, processes, or materials
- Ensure participation is accessible, supported, and voluntary – not tokenistic
 - Involve people living with dementia early before decisions are finalized
 - Seek input on meaningful questions, not just symbolic ones
 - Keep sessions short, with breaks built in, and allow flexibility to step away if needed
 - Follow dementia supportive communication principles
- Act on feedback where possible, and communicate what has changed as a result

When leaders model inclusive decision-making, it signals that lived experience matters and that feedback leads to real action.

Amplifying impact means not only sharing the message, but sharing power, listening deeply, and moving forward together.