

## Introduction

Welcome to your **Course Workbook** – a personal companion on your dementia-supportive learning journey. Here, you’ll find reflection prompts, scenario activities, and open-ended questions that help you think more deeply about dementia, communication, and connection. You can complete it as you move through the course or return to it afterward to capture new insights.

This is your space for honest reflection – a place to explore feelings, challenge assumptions, and discover new ways to connect with people living with dementia.

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## Session 1: Reframing Dementia

### Activity 1.1: Finding the Emotion Line

Now that you have watched the video in Part 1 of the online course to rethink dementia and how it impacts the brain’s “transport system”, you understand how dementia can limit which “routes” a person’s thoughts can travel. Let’s explore what that means in everyday situations.

In the following examples, think about what’s really happening inside the brain’s transport network. Write down your thoughts in the workbook before revealing the feedback.

1. What emotion might take the lead?
2. Put yourself in the shoes of a person living with dementia, whose ticket only reliably works on the Emotion Line. Imagine not being able to use memory, logic, or context to process your feelings or fill in the gaps. How might you respond?
3. Now consider how you, as someone who can travel freely on all the lines - memory, logic, knowledge context, and emotion – would respond in the same situation. Why might your response be different from that of a person living with dementia?

Take a moment with each situation to imagine the feeling that starts the journey and how it might shape the path that follows.

*Scenario 1*

**Bob is sitting comfortably on his couch, enjoying a quiet afternoon. The house is still, and the familiar view outside his window – the trees, the other houses, the neighbours passing by – feels calming. Suddenly, a large figure appears at the edge of the yard. Bob doesn't recognize him. The man is walking directly and quickly toward the front door with a large, heavy bag over his shoulder.**

1. What emotion(s) might take the lead?

2. Put yourself in the shoes of a person living with dementia, whose ticket only reliably works on the Emotion Line. Imagine not being able to use memory, logic, or context to process your feelings or fill in the gaps. How might you respond?

3. Now consider how you, as someone who can travel freely on all the lines - memory, logic, knowledge context, and emotion – would respond in the same situation. Why might your response be different from that of a person living with dementia?

When you have written down your own thoughts, return to the online session to reveal the feedback.

*Scenario 2*

**Ms. Patel has slipped into her favourite café. She visits most mornings for a quiet moment to herself. She chooses her usual table by the window and puts her bag down. When the server brings her drink, she’s expecting the warm, familiar comfort of her regular tea. But when she looks down, she sees a cup of coffee instead. The colour, the smell, the taste – it’s all wrong.**

1. What emotion(s) might take the lead?

2. Put yourself in the shoes of a person living with dementia, whose ticket only reliably works on the Emotion Line. Imagine not being able to use memory, logic, or context to process your feelings or fill in the gaps. How might you respond?

3. Now consider how you, as someone who can travel freely on all the lines - memory, logic, knowledge context, and emotion – would respond in the same situation. Why might your response be different from that of a person living with dementia?

When you have written down your own thoughts, return to the online session to reveal the feedback.

*Scenario 3*

**Mr. Thompson is running a few simple errands on a quiet weekday morning. He stops at the bank machine to get out money for the week – just like he has every Tuesday for as long as he can remember. He inserts his card, enters his PIN, and as he waits for his balance to appear, he plays his favourite game: “Guess the Balance” - he takes pride in his ability to keep track of his money. Confident of his guess, he looks down to check the number on the screen. It’s lower than he expected. Much lower.**

1. What emotion(s) might take the lead?

2. Put yourself in the shoes of a person living with dementia, whose ticket only reliably works on the Emotion Line. Imagine not being able to use memory, logic, or context to process your feelings or fill in the gaps. How might you respond?

3. Now consider how you, as someone who can travel freely on all the lines - memory, logic, knowledge context, and emotion – would respond in the same situation. Why might your response be different from that of a person living with dementia?

When you have written down your own thoughts, return to the online session to reveal the feedback.

### Activity 1.3: Mapping Your Own Journey

As you have just learned through session 1, before we can truly connect with people living with dementia, it helps to pause and think about **which line(s) we usually travel on** (logic, memory, context, knowledge, or emotion). This will help us recognize when we're expecting people living with dementia to follow our lead instead of following theirs.

Use the questions below to explore your own emotional “map.” There are no right or wrong answers — just opportunities to notice where your thoughts and feelings take you.

#### **1. Your Usual Route**

When we react to a situation, our thoughts tend towards the line that feels most natural to us.

Which “line” do you usually travel first – Logic, Memory, Context, or Emotion?

*TIP: It might help to read the descriptions of the different lines below and think about which sounds most like you in everyday life. You might find that you travel different lines in different situations, and that's perfectly normal.*

How does that route shape the way you communicate or make decisions?

When might that approach be helpful, and when might it make connection harder?

## Memory Line – The Familiar Route

You draw on your past experiences and personal history to make sense of what’s happening.

You might think, *“This reminds me of the time when…”* or *“That approach worked before, so I’ll do it again.”*

- You’re likely to find comfort in patterns, routine, and tradition.
- When things feel unpredictable, you might look to the past for guidance or reassurance.
- **Challenge:** it can be hard to connect when someone doesn’t share those same memories or points of reference.

## Logic Line – The Reasoning Route

You rely on rules, evidence, and problem-solving to find clarity.

You might think, *“If I can explain the facts, they’ll understand,”* or *“There must be a logical reason for this.”*

- You value fairness, consistency, and clear communication.
- You often try to fix confusion by offering information or correcting misunderstandings.
- **Challenge:** reasoning doesn’t always create comfort — especially when emotions are steering the journey.

## Knowledge Line – The Learned Route

You draw on what you’ve learned — the facts, skills, and information you’ve gathered over time — to guide your understanding and actions. You might think, *“I know how this should work,”* or *“The rule says this is the right way to do it.”*

- You feel grounded in information and experience that you trust.
- You rely on knowledge to make sense of the world and to feel confident in your choices.
- **Challenge:** Facts may lose their meaning for people living with dementia, and explanations that once made sense no longer connect — making it important to shift from teaching or correcting toward reassurance and emotional understanding.

## Context Line – The Situational Route

You pay attention to what’s happening *right now*— who’s present, what’s being said, and what the environment feels like.

You might think, *“Given what’s going on here, this is probably the best choice.”*

- You adapt your response to the setting and the people around you.
- You notice cues like tone of voice, time of day, or how busy the room feels.

- Challenge: when someone’s awareness of context changes — as it can with dementia — it may feel like they’re ignoring what seems obvious.

## Emotion Line – The Express Line

You respond to how you and others feel in the moment.

You might think, *“They seem upset — I want to help them feel better,”* or *“I’m feeling anxious, so I’ll step away.”*

- You tune in easily to mood and emotion.
- You connect deeply, often through empathy or shared feeling.
- Challenge: emotions can shift quickly, and it can be hard to pause and think before acting.

## 2. Tickets and Expectations

Think about times when you’ve interacted with someone who seemed to think or communicate differently from you. For example, one of you was angry or upset, and the other was not.

How did you expect them to “travel” with you on YOUR preferred line?

What feelings came up when they couldn’t or didn’t? (e.g., frustration, worry, confusion)

What might change if you tried to join them on their line instead?

**3. Detours and Roadblocks**

Everyone has moments when emotions make it hard to stay patient or flexible.

What situations or feelings make it difficult for you to slow down and listen?

What “roadblocks” might stop you from meeting someone on the Emotion Line?

**4. Finding Connection**

Imagine choosing to travel on the Emotion Line more often – starting with feelings before facts.

What would that look or sound like for you in daily life?

How might it change the way you respond to people living with dementia — or to others in your community?

**5. Mapping Your Next Journey**

Take a moment to think ahead.

What's one small shift you can make to stay open to the Emotion Line when interacting with others?

How will you remind yourself to pause and check which “line” you’re on before responding?

## Session 2: Creating Supportive Spaces

### Activity 2.1: The Need for Calm

#### Matching Game #1

Answer the following questions after you've played the **first** matching game in the online course.

How many attempts did it take?

(you can find this information at the bottom left of the activity window)

How long did it take to match all the pairs?

(you can also find this information at the bottom left of the activity window)

#### Matching Game #2

Answer the following questions after you've played the **second** matching game in the online course.

How many attempts did it take?

(you can find this information at the bottom left of the activity window)

How long did it take to match all the pairs?

(you can also find this information at the bottom left of the activity window)

**Reflection**

What did you notice about the two games? How were they the same? How were they different?

How did you feel playing the second game compared with the first game?

What do you think this means for people living with dementia who already experience challenges with memory and thinking?

## Activity 2.3: Space Audit

### Space Audit Checklist

#### *Part 1: General Environment Assessment*

Through Session 2, you've learned how physical spaces can support (or challenge) people living with dementia, now it's time to take a closer look at your own environment. Use the following guiding questions to describe the general feel of the space. Ideally, you should complete this assessment for several different times of the day/week, so there is space provided for a few different times.

**Day/Time 1:** \_\_\_\_\_

- *Is this space calm or busy? Overwhelming or welcoming?*
  
- *Would a person feel comfortable finding their way, waiting, or asking for help here?*
  
- *Are there clear places to rest, orient, or regain confidence?*

**Day/Time 2:** \_\_\_\_\_

- *Is this space calm or busy? Overwhelming or welcoming?*
  
- *Would a person feel comfortable finding their way, waiting, or asking for help here?*
  
- *Are there clear places to rest, orient, or regain confidence?*

**Day/Time 3:** \_\_\_\_\_

- *Is this space calm or busy? Overwhelming or welcoming?*
  
- *Would a person feel comfortable finding their way, waiting, or asking for help here?*
  
- *Are there clear places to rest, orient, or regain confidence?*

Additional Thoughts:

*Part 2: Specific Space Assessment*

Use the checklist below to identify what’s already working well, what could be improved, and what isn’t relevant to your setting. Use the following feasibility categories to help.

Feasibility ratings:

- A. I can do it now, on my own
- B. It is easy to do, I just need my supervisor to agree
- C. I will need more help, support and input from my supervisor and leadership, but feels doable
- D. A change like this will need to be driven by organizational leadership

Dementia Supportive Action	In place	Not yet in place	Not Applicable	Feasibility Rating (A-D)
<b>LEVEL 1 Actions</b>				
<b>Reduce clutter.</b> Spaces are neat, uncluttered, and free of obstacles.				

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<b>Have a designated greeter.</b> A staff member is available to guide people, explain how things work, and offer reassurance.				
<b>Reduce background noise.</b> Sound levels are kept low to avoid competing noises.				
<b>Reduce sensory overload</b> Sensory friendly times are in place, ideally earlier in the day.				
<b>Notes:</b>				
<b>LEVEL 2 Actions</b>				
<b>Make signage clear and simple.</b> Signs are easy to read, placed at eye level, and supported with symbols when possible.				
<b>Provide a rest area.</b> There is a comfortable, easy-to-find place to sit for waiting and doing business.				
<b>Provide Sensory Kits.</b> Kits containing items that help calm and focus the senses are available				
<b>Display Time Clearly.</b> Time is clearly visible on a large, easy-to-read clock, ideally digital.				
<b>Identify Landmarks.</b> Landmarks and important areas are highlighted with features, colours, or signs to clearly identify the purpose of spaces.				
<b>Notes:</b>				
<b>LEVEL 3 Actions</b>				
<b>Minimize confusing reflections and patterns.</b> There are few-to-no mirrors, shiny or patterned surfaces, and cluttered walls.				
<b>Provide accessible family washrooms.</b> Family or companion washrooms and change rooms are available				

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<b>Improve lighting for comfort and clarity.</b> Lighting fixtures reduce shadows, glare, and flickering.				
<b>Use colour for orientation and reassurance.</b> Routes, key areas, doors and important locations are marked with contrasting colours.				
<b>Choose comfortable, easy-to-use furniture.</b> Furniture is sturdy, supportive, and in contrasting colours that stand out from floors and walls.				
<b>Notes:</b>				

## Part 3: Action Plan

Choose a few steps you can take right away, make a plan for longer-term improvements, and explore alternative actions when larger changes aren't possible yet.

1. Review the items you rated as **Feasibility Level A**.

Select one or two items to commit to now.

Action 1:

I commit to \_\_\_\_\_.

I will implement this change by \_\_\_\_\_.

Action 2 (Optional):

I commit to \_\_\_\_\_.

I will implement this change by \_\_\_\_\_.

2. Review the items you rated as **Feasibility Level B**. Select one to explore further.

I would like to further explore

\_\_\_\_\_.

To implement this change I need to talk to \_\_\_\_\_.

My plan for arranging and having this conversation

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Before moving onto the more challenging changes, it's a good idea to try the easier ones now and observe how people respond. Gather feedback and adjust as needed. Celebrate small wins - they build momentum and inspire others to take part. However, even if a larger change isn't possible right now, there may be some alternative actions that will have a similar effect.

3. Review the items you rated as **Feasibility Level C and D**. Use the table to see if there are any alternatives you can implement easily

<b>Recommended Step</b> (e.g. minimize confusing reflections and patterns)	<b>Feasible Alternative Action</b>

## Session 3: Small Actions, Big Changes

### Pause & Reflect: Noticing What's Around You

After reading through Part 2: What to Look For, move through the prompts below to help you think more deeply about positive moments and signs that someone may need extra support.

#### **Pause and Reflect 1: Positive Moments to Notice and Build On**

Think about a time when you have noticed and built on an opportunity to build connection, even if it doesn't relate to dementia.

*How did it make you feel to witness and encourage one of these moments?*

#### **Pause and Reflect 2: Possible Signs That Someone Might Need Extra Support**

We can't be aware of everything all the time, so it's helpful to be intentional about where we focus our attention. Take a moment to think about a place or situation in your own life where you might interact with someone living with dementia.

*When and where might a person need a little extra support?*

*How could noticing this help you focus your awareness where it will have the most impact?*

### Activity 3.1: Awareness in Practice

Look carefully at the pictures of a scene in a library below and use your situational awareness skills to answer the following questions.



1. *Who might need a bit of extra support right now? What makes you think that?*

2. *Who seems comfortable and confident? What makes you think that?*

3. *What could you do to support each person?*

### Activity 3.2: The Mirror Game

Being a supportive communicator starts with being aware of your own habits. After completing the short mirror activity as directed in Activity 3.2 of the online course, reflect on the questions below to tune in to your natural communication style and how it might feel to someone experiencing dementia.

#### **Reflection Questions:**

*What were you good at right from the beginning?*

*What did you notice that you were able to improve with practice?*

*What will you focus on when you communicate with people living with dementia?*

## Session 4: A Strong Foundation of Support

### Activity 4.1: Community Connections Reflection

After reading in the online course about how community connections can affect the daily experiences of people living with dementia, imagine you're part of a similar moment – perhaps as a cashier, volunteer, or neighbour. What could you do to make that experience smoother or more reassuring?

What made the first version of each scenario different from the second?

How might consistent, familiar interactions help someone feel calmer and more confident in daily life?

What signals tell someone you're paying attention?

How can you communicate calm and care without words?

What might 'familiarity' look or sound like in your role?

### Activity 4.3: Cultivating Your Community Garden

Every gardener knows that what grows tomorrow depends on what we tend to today. This activity helps you notice the relationships already growing in your everyday life and identify where you might plant a few new seeds of connection.

#### *Part 1: Mapping your community network?*

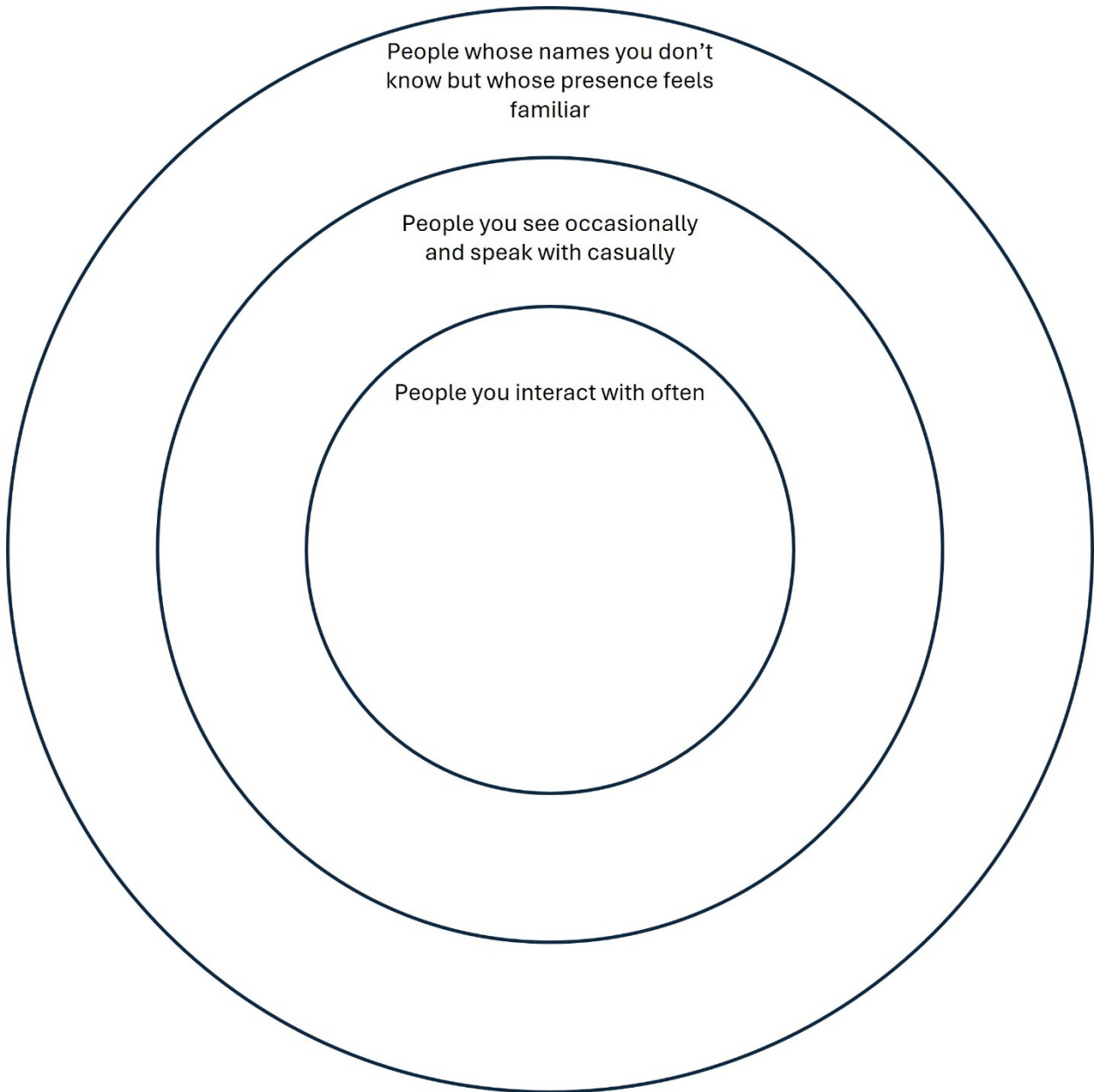
Take a moment to think about your daily routines – the people you greet, serve, or pass by regularly. You might be surprised by how many connections are already growing around you. Even a quick nod to the barista, a chat with a neighbour, or a familiar face on your commute counts. There’s usually more fertile soil for planting than we realize. In your workbook, draw a quick map of your community connections. Include:

- People you interact with often (e.g., coworkers, clients, neighbours)
- People you see occasionally and speak with casually
- People whose names you don’t know but whose presence feels familiar

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**Now, reflect:**

How do these relationships contribute to your own sense of belonging?

How might consistency and recognition help you and people on your map feel part of something larger?

*Tip: Don't worry about making it perfect. Even a rough sketch can help you see how much connection already exists in your day-to-day world – and how many seeds of belonging are ready to grow.*

**Part 2: Plant and nurture flowers**

Now it's time to plant some flowers of your own. Choose one community relationship from your map that you'd like to strengthen. Use the prompts below to write a mini action plan:

Who is the person or group?

What small, consistent action could help build trust?

When and how will you start?

How will you follow up and maintain that connection?

## Session 5: Amplifying Impact

### Activity 5.1: My Plan for Sharing the DSC Message

1. To me, a Dementia Supportive Community is:

*(Focus on what it looks or feels like in everyday life, rather than a formal definition.)*

2. A brief story or example I can share that shows Dementia Supportive Communities in action is:

*(This could be something you witnessed, experienced, learned in the course, or heard from someone else.)*

3. Sharing meaningful experiences and impacts

- a. Two ideas or insights from the Dementia Supportive Communities courses that made an impression on me (and that I could easily explain to someone else) are:

1.	
2.	

- b. Two specific actions that I/my team have taken to make the space or interactions more dementia supportive are:

1. Action Taken:	
	Since making the change I/we have noticed: <i>(for example: positive feedback, comfort, confidence, ease of interaction)</i>
2. Action Taken:	
	Since making the change I/we have noticed:

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## 4. Matching the message to the audience

a. When I talk about DSC with my colleagues/supervisor/manager I will focus on:

*(For example: benefits to staff, customer experience, safety, values, or organizational goals.)*

b. When I talk about DSC with my colleagues/supervisor/manager I will focus on:

*(For example: Changes implemented and impact, benefit of DSC training, available supports, or where to get help.)*

c. When I talk about DSC with my friends, neighbours, and family, I will focus on:

*(For example: sharing stories (respectfully), explaining why small actions matter, benefit of DSC training, importance of empathy)*

5. I will make support visible to all by:

## Closing message

As you finish the course and move forward, remember that understanding and connection grow over time. The thoughts and feelings you've explored here are just the beginning of an ongoing path. Keep this workbook as a place to return to — to add new reflections, revisit earlier insights, or capture moments that deepen your understanding of dementia and the role of emotion in communication.

Each time you come back, you'll see something new about yourself, about others, and about what it means to build truly Dementia Supportive Communities.