

Lessening the Impact of Dementia – Training Courses 2026

Understanding Dementia was founded in 2018 with the aim of reducing the impact of dementia on those who live with it and those who care for them. After working in hospitals, care homes and in the community, our CEO Shirley Pearce identified a gap between dementia awareness and a real understanding of the condition, even among professionals. Dementia training often has a biomedical focus on changes in the brain, body and behaviour. Understanding Dementia and Lessening its Impact is different: rather than focusing on deficits or fighting dementia as a disease, it works positively with the condition as a disability. This reduces its impact on the person, so behaviour becomes less of an issue.

We began offering interactive training via virtual meetings online to family carers during lockdown in 2020. Even those whose caring role or location prevented them from attending face-to-face events could participate, and their feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

Training for Health and Care Professionals

In 2021 we developed a new course for health and care professionals, that they could attend from anywhere with internet access. Anyone who regularly encounters people with dementia in their role, or who supervises, mentors or manages others who do, in any health, care or social setting, will find this course beneficial. No previous training is required to understand this course, but whatever courses they have done in the past, delegates will learn something new.

Our course for professionals consists of 9 weekly interactive online sessions. Each session includes a short presentation using real-life examples, with time for questions and discussion. The course improves delegates' understanding of how dementia affects the person, and develops their skills to:

- lessen the impact of dementia on the individual and their family
- de-escalate distressed behaviour
- avoid inadvertently triggering distress
- put clients at ease.

Topics covered in each 60-minute interactive session:

1. **Introduction to Understanding Dementia**
– what's different about this approach, and how it can lessen the impact of dementia
2. **Types of dementia and related conditions**
– how they differ, and what they have in common
3. **Well-being in dementia**
– its importance, why it is so vulnerable in dementia, and how to support it
4. **Questions**
– why they can be unhelpful in dementia, and how to find better ways to support choice
5. **Being a buddy**
– how to get alongside the people we care for, and build better relationships
6. **Contradiction and confrontation**
– why they are best avoided, and how to do that without getting tangled up in lies
7. **Listening and talking skills**

- what to listen out for, what we can learn, and how to deal with repetitive questions
- 8. **The hazards of 'parenting' our elders**
 - why role reversal can cause problems, and how to address 'difficult' behaviour
- 9. **Counterintuitive strategies for managing risk, professional boundaries etc**
 - how using this approach can make difficult situations easier to manage

Priced at £235 per person*, our training for professionals is very cost-effective. A hard copy of the booklet 'Understanding Dementia and Lessening its Impact' is included, with electronic handouts after each session and CPD certificate on completion. During the course, reflective homework completed online helps to embed the training as trainees apply the principles of this approach to their own workplace and caseload. After the course, they are invited to join our online community of professionals using this approach, for ongoing discussion and support.

With a whole team trained in this approach, clients can experience seamless and unobtrusive care.

***Bursary fund**

If trainees have no access to a training budget, please contact us as we may be able to help via our Bursary Fund.

Below are some examples of feedback from health and care professionals:

I work with people with dementia. I have attended a number of courses on dementia, but this one has definitely altered my practice. Each one-hour session introduced one new concept. I gradually changed how I interacted with clients. I now focus on feelings, not facts. I ask fewer questions. Since then, the people I support have experienced fewer incidents of aggression, agitation or distress.

Marta, occupational therapist, 2021

Out of all the dementia courses I have done, this was by far the best and most thought provoking. It has allowed me to think differently and have a greater understanding of how to interact with residents... I think everyone working with those living with dementia should enrol on this course.

Stacey, care home team leader, 2022

I have taken away so much knowledge about dementia, and it has really changed my outlook on how dementia patients feel on a daily basis. I understand how to better communicate with them, which allows me to "become a buddy", and then to facilitate my assessments in a stress-free manner. [The course] was highly beneficial and I will be putting everything I have learned into my practice. It has changed the way in which I can approach dementia patients, and how to best use my new knowledge about dementia to then benefit my practice. The course was excellent, and I would definitely recommend.

Toni, occupational therapist, 2023

For me the best thing was hearing real life shared experiences as this is much more relatable than just learned text book information. The stories shared by the trainers are all real so it makes it much easier to understand their impact. Also being able to share a situation you are unsure of how to handle and hearing a different approach/perspective is hugely beneficial.....It's already changed the way I will talk to volunteers about visiting someone with dementia.....I just wanted to thank you for your time and guidance, I found the course extremely helpful and wouldn't hesitate to recommend to others so thank you.

Karan, assessor for befriending charity, 2024

With a whole organisation trained in this approach, clients can experience seamless and unobtrusive care.