



Becoming a dementia-friendly business means empowering people living with dementia to shop comfortably, remain as independent as possible in their community and continue to engage in activities they enjoy.

Why do dementia-friendly shopping experiences matter?

As businesses, creating dementia-friendly services is central to maintaining continuity in the quality of life for people living with dementia. Additional benefits include:

- **Enhanced customer service:** Dementia-friendly experiences attract new customers and strengthen your relationship to the community you serve.
- **Inclusivity for all:** Extra services and more relaxed and supportive shopping environments provide an inclusive experience for not only customers affected by dementia, but other people with cognitive differences.
- **Increased competitiveness:** Dementia-friendly features give your business an edge as customers feel more comfortable and welcomed to take their time while shopping.
- **Improves brand reputation:** Community members will recognize that your business ensures customers are well looked after and receive the support they need.

- **Demonstrates your commitment** to work towards global dementia-friendly and accessibility standards.

Everyone in your business has a role to play in contributing to a dementia-friendly environment!

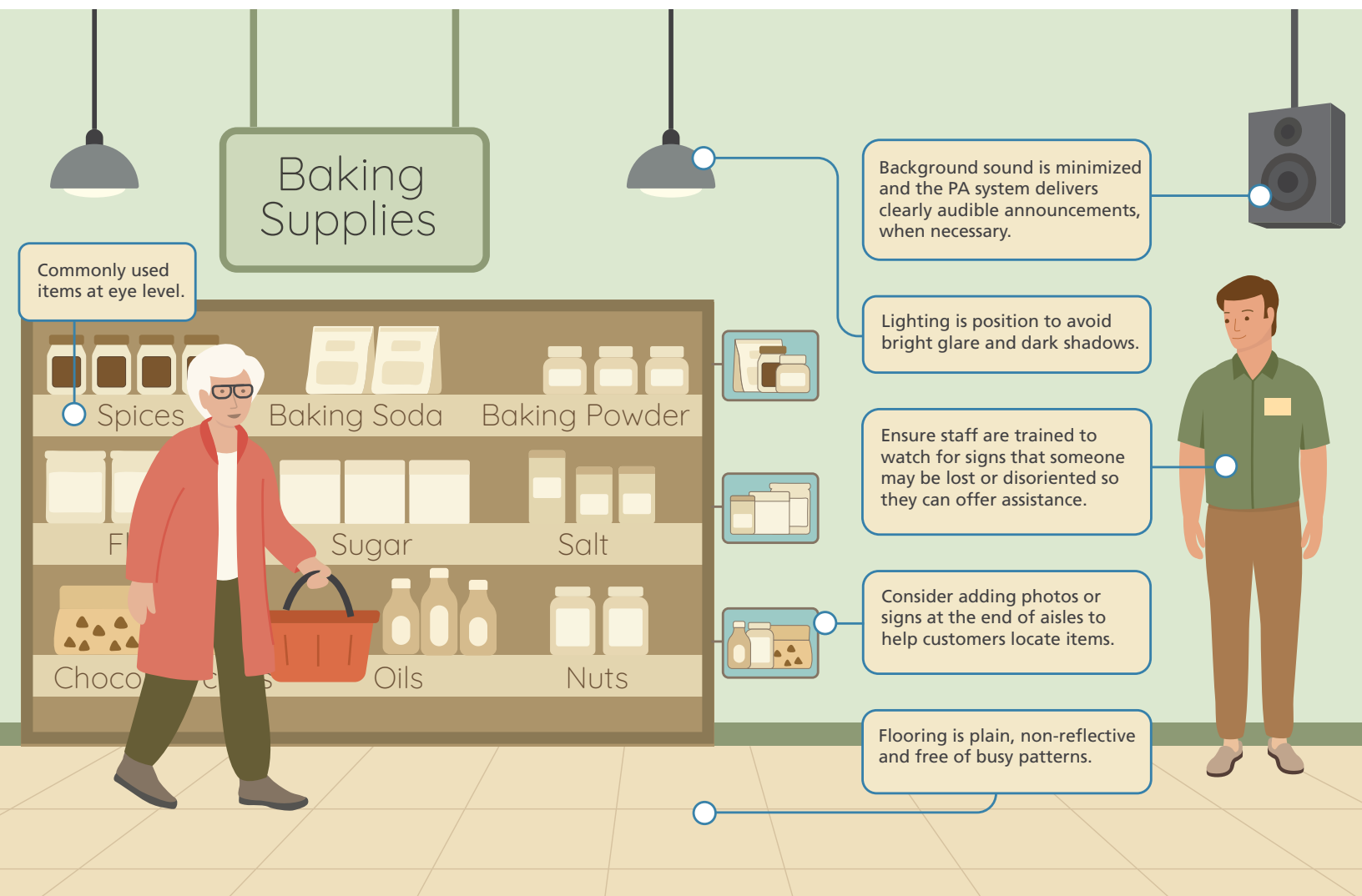
Dementia-friendly staff training and communication:

Ensuring your employees are trained to recognize and assist customers affected by dementia is vital. Here are key things to consider:

- **Learn more about dementia:** Provide training to your staff so they are aware of the signs and symptoms of dementia, can better understand what it might be like to live with dementia and can identify when a customer might be living with dementia and how they can offer support. To learn more about the next steps you can take in becoming dementia friendly, visit alzheimer.ca/dfc.

- **Provide personalized service:** Get to know regular customers, including their likes and dislikes, to offer more tailored assistance.
- **Encourage interaction:** Build a staffing model that allows employees to offer more time and attention to customers who need it.
- **Be welcoming:** A smile and a warm greeting can make a significant difference. If a customer seems lost, offer help with a simple question, like, “Can I help you find something?”
- **Clear communication:** When assisting customers, ask one question or provide suggestions one at a time. Avoid overwhelming them with multiple questions or requests.
- **Assistance with checkout:** If a customer is having difficulty at the self-checkout or using the point of sale (POS) machine, offer support as needed.

Tip: Speak slowly, make eye contact and do not rush.



Did you know?

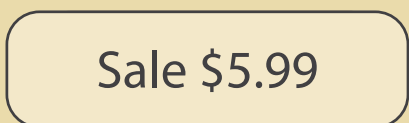
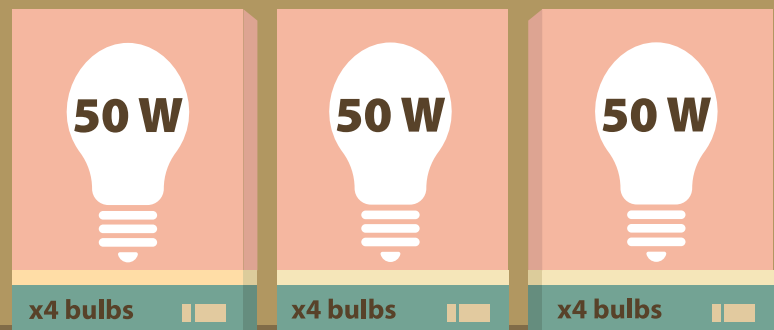
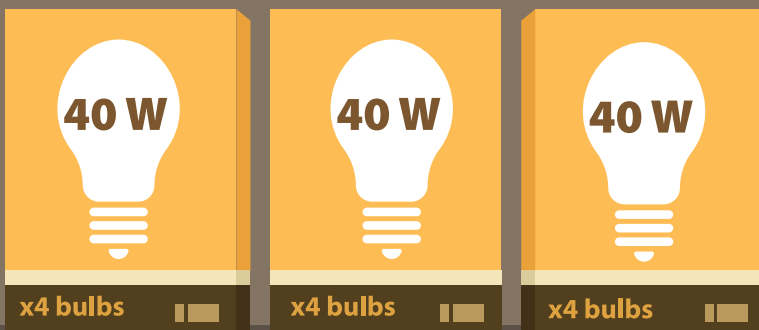
The physical environment and design of store displays, waiting areas, customer service areas and signage can all play an important role in improving the shopping experience for a person living with dementia and their care partners.

How to create a dementia-friendly physical environment:

- **Accessible spaces:** Provide ramps, handrails and accessible elevators. Ensure the parking lot has accessible spots and a designated drop-off/pick-up area near the entrances and exits.
- Consider having staff assistance available in these areas if possible.
- **Seating and rest areas:** Place comfortable seating throughout the store, especially near high-traffic areas, to give customers a place to rest. Comfortable seating should include chairs that are not too low to the ground and have armrests to assist those who need support getting up.
- **Quiet areas:** Consider providing a quiet space for customers who may be overwhelmed by the noise of a busy shopping environment.



Improve the readability of signage by using simple fonts (e.g., **Arial** or **Calibri**), bold text and capitalizing the first letter of each word. Avoid highly stylized text and symbols. Ensure signs have a matte surface and there is good contrast between the background and text.



- **Reduce noise:** Ensure background music is at an appropriate volume level. Turn music off or turn down the volume during “quiet shopping hours” for a peaceful shopping experience.
- **Simple signage:** Use clear, easy-to-read signs with large text and universally recognized symbols. Place signage at eye level against plain backgrounds and have signs or arrows that guide customers around the store for increased wayfinding.
- **Lighting:** Ensure natural lighting to avoid confusion caused by shadows and glare. Bright or harsh lighting should be avoided.
- **Contrasting colours:** Use contrasting colours for floors, walls and doorways to help customers living with dementia identify key areas. This includes using bright strips (e.g., yellow or red) on stairs and other changes in elevation.
- **Clear aisles and displays:** Keep aisles clear of clutter and ensure products are displayed in an organized way.
- **Simplify décor:** Simplify décor and furnishings to reduce visual stimulation where possible. Limit placing mirrors in public areas as a décor and use for functionality only (e.g., in washrooms or fitting rooms).
- **Implement easy to use and supportive carts:** If your store provides shopping carts, ensure they are well-maintained,

light, easy to maneuver and placed in an accessible area of the store. Consider offering wheelchairs with shopping baskets on the front, this will allow care partners to offer the person living with dementia a seat and involve them in the shopping.

- **Accessible washrooms:** Provide gender-neutral and family washrooms and fitting rooms so care partners and family members can provide assistance if needed.

To learn more, please review the tip sheet for dementia-friendly spaces at alzheimer.ca/dfc/resources.

Tip: Place commonly used items at eye level so they are easier to find. Ensure price tags and labels are large, clear and legible.

Dementia-friendly relaxed shopping hours

Consider setting up dementia-friendly relaxed shopping hours or slow lanes to enhance customer experience.

- **Choose the right time:** Offer relaxed hours early in the day, as people living with dementia may experience fatigue or confusion later.
- **Welcome customers:** Ensure staff are available at the entrance or in a drop-off area to greet customers.

- **Encourage a relaxed shopping experience:** Support staff members to keep a calm environment, answer questions if they come up and allow customers the time they need to complete transactions.
- **Signage and awareness:** Ensure other customers know about the relaxed shopping hours (such as through signage and awareness campaigns). Slow lanes should be clearly marked and dedicated to customers needing extra assistance.
- **Adjust the environment:** Adjust lighting and lower the music volume to reduce sensory overload.
- **Reduce or limit distractions:** During relaxed shopping hours, avoid scheduling business activities such as receiving shipments or stocking shelves to limit noise and distraction.
- **Support staff:** Pair new staff with experienced employees who are trained in dementia-friendly practices.
- **Rest areas:** Place additional seating areas around the store so customers can take breaks as needed.
- **Aisle photos:** Consider adding photos or signs at the end of aisles to help customers locate items.
- **Extra assistance:** Offer help with finding, bagging or carrying purchases to cars or taxis.

For more information, or to learn more about dementia and dementia-friendly communities, reach out to your local [Alzheimer Society](#) or visit the [Dementia-Friendly Canada website](#).



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