



Alzheimers *New Zealand*

About Alzheimers New Zealand

Alzheimers NZ represents people living with dementia at a national level by raising awareness of dementia, providing information and resources, advocating for high quality services, and promoting research about prevention, treatment, cure and care.

We support local Alzheimers NZ organisations throughout New Zealand, each of which is a member of Alzheimers NZ. Local Alzheimers organisations provide support, education, information and related services directly to members of their communities who are affected by dementia.

These services may include:

- Information and education to assist with understanding and living with a dementia diagnosis
- Support for family, friends and whanāu coping with the demands of caring
- Support groups and day programmes for people affected by dementia.

Facts about dementia

- Dementia is an umbrella term used to describe a group of symptoms that change and damage the brain
- The most common symptoms include changes in: memory, thinking, behaviour, personality and emotion
- Anyone can get dementia but the likelihood increases as people age
- Dementia is progressive and cannot be prevented, cured or slowed

Statistics about dementia in NZ

- Almost 70,000 New Zealanders are living with dementia today
- 4 out of 5 New Zealanders are in some way affected by dementia in some way
- More than 170,000 Kiwis will be living with dementia by 2050
- Dementia impacts more women than men – around 30% higher
- The total cost of dementia to NZ is now around \$1.7b and will reach around \$5b by 2050
- New models of care that keep people healthier at home for longer could achieve cost benefit ratios of 6.6 times the value of investment

Attachments:

- [10 warning signs of dementia](#)
- [Dementia Economic Impact Report 2016](#) (PDF) and [infographic](#) (PDF)
- [Reducing the risk of dementia](#)

Alzheimers NZ's Mission: 'A Dementia Friendly NZ'

Dementia is one of New Zealand's biggest healthcare challenges and it will have major personal, societal and fiscal impacts in the years ahead, yet there is very little discussion or acknowledgement of its everyday impacts. Most people with dementia live in our communities. They shop, work, eat out, catch the bus, go to the library and do everything else we all enjoy doing. One of Alzheimers NZ's core goals is to create a dementia-friendly New Zealand that caters well for the many thousands of people who will be living with the condition over the next 30 years.

We want New Zealand to be an open and inclusive society - a place where people with dementia feel valued and safe, and where they can contribute to and participate in their communities.

Find more details about dementia and our organisation on our website: www.alzheimers.org.nz

Things to keep in mind when reporting on dementia

Media plays an important role in communicating ideas and information to the public. Here are some key things to keep in mind to ensure you are reporting responsibly on the condition:

Positive images

Positive images are in breaking down the fear and stigma surrounding dementia, and making the condition one that people are more encouraged to discuss. This might mean using images or reporting on people with dementia who are actively engaged in their communities and living a happy life.

A 'cure' for dementia

It is important to be cautious when discussing the possibility of a 'cure'. While this may make appealing media, inaccurate or exaggerated suggestions in this area can be harmful for people affected by dementia.

Where to go for help

Media can help people affected by dementia to get a diagnosis, help and support by including a point of contact in their coverage.

People who are concerned that they or someone they know has dementia should be directed to their GP in the first instance. For information, support and services they should contact Alzheimers NZ.

Normalising the condition

Telling the stories of people with dementia, particularly high profile people who have an experience with the condition, can be helpful in normalising the condition and breaking down the stigma associated with dementia.

Interviewing someone with dementia

- Interviewing someone with dementia may require patience, and in some instances it may be best to include their support person/family/whanāu.
- If you are interviewing someone with dementia, allow more time for questions and repeat questions as required.
- Ask only one clearly phrased question at a time and be clear and precise about what you are asking.
- Be aware that because dementia is a memory condition, it may be difficult for the person to answer questions which require them to draw on their memory.
- It is common to receive short, concise responses rather than drawn out explanations from people with dementia.
- Check with the person's support person/family/whanāu after the interview, or provide a draft of your article for fact checking if possible.

Terminology

USE	INSTEAD OF
People/person with dementia People/person affected by dementia People/person living with dementia Person who has dementia	Dementia patient Sufferer Victim Demented Aged Afflicted Senile Cursed
Condition	Disease
Person who cares for/cares about/looks after/supports/helps Support person Primary support person Helper Family, friends and whanāu	Caregiver Care partner
Family carers Unpaid carers	Informal carers
Older person/people	Aged person/people
Challenging, debilitating, devastating	Hopeless, impossible, unbearable
Impact/effect of caring for a person with dementia	Carer burden, burden of caring