

Support People With Dementia This Christmas

Typically thought of as a wonderful time of the year, Christmas is supposed to be a joyous occasion for all. But it can be a stressful and lonely time of year for people living with dementia, with many feeling isolated and unable to join in with the festivities.

Become a Dementia Friend and support people with dementia this Christmas.

21m

people in England are estimated to have a close friend or family member with dementia

49%

of people caring for a person with dementia believe Christmas is an isolating time for people with the condition

71%

of people affected by dementia think a lack of understanding has caused people with dementia to be left out at Christmas

63%

of people living with dementia said they have received fewer invitations to social events since receiving a diagnosis

63%

of people don't think shops are doing enough to support people with dementia

45%

of people are worried about how friends and family will react to unusual behaviour of their loved one who has dementia

Star of the Dementia Friends advert Gina Shaw, aged 61 was diagnosed with dementia last year.

Many people living with dementia, including myself, can enjoy Christmas as much as the next person. The important thing is to know how to provide the right support for someone if they become confused or agitated. Becoming a Dementia Friend is a simple step to understanding how to do this.



Celebrity Dementia Friend Fiona Phillips is an ambassador for Alzheimer's Society. In 2006 her mother died with Alzheimer's and her father was diagnosed with the disease shortly afterwards, and died in 2012.



I know first hand the devastating impact Alzheimer's has for those living with the disease and their families. Christmas is such a wonderful time of year but it can also be very stressful. It's so important for friends and families to support each other, both emotionally and practically. Just being on the end of a phone or offering to help with the shopping can be a big help for someone caring for a person living with dementia.

To find out more visit www.dementiafriends.org.uk

Tips for supporting people with dementia at Christmas

Given by carers and families of people with dementia and compiled by Alzheimer's Society

IN THE HOME

Get everyone involved: There are many ways to involve people living with dementia at Christmas time – from something as simple as hanging a bauble on the tree to doing a spot of Christmas shopping. The important thing is to remember to make sure they are included.

Slowly does it: Introduce the Christmas environment slowly. Think about putting up decorations gradually over a few days so it doesn't come as a big change to the person's usual setting.

Bring back old memories: Whether it's an old song they used to enjoy or a classic Christmas film, find something fun you can take part in. Making a family photo album or memory box could be a nice way to spend time together.

Don't over do it: Someone with dementia may feel overwhelmed by lots of noise and unfamiliar people around, so try and keep visitors to a few at a time. Schedule periods of rest throughout the day or have a quiet room they can retreat to in case things become too much.

It's good to talk: Christmas can be a very stressful time, so don't bottle it up. Alzheimer's Society's Talking Point forum is a place to ask advice, join in discussions and feel supported by others living with dementia. Or call Alzheimer's Society's helpline on 0300 222 1122.

By 2015, there will be 850,000 people with dementia in the UK. Dementia Friends is about gaining an understanding of dementia and the small ways you can help. To become a Dementia Friend just watch a short online video or attend a face-to-face session in your local area.

Visit dementiafriends.org.uk now

IN THE COMMUNITY

Become a Dementia Friend: By wearing your Dementia Friends badge with pride whilst out and about this Christmas, you'll make a big difference by showing your support and understanding to those affected by dementia.

Christmas shopping: With a bit of planning, Christmas shopping doesn't have to be too stressful. Shop in the morning when it's quieter and you can take your time. A number of major retailers now have employees who are Dementia Friends in stores, including Argos, Barclays, Homebase, Lloyds Bank and M&S. So look for the badge and don't be afraid to ask for help.

Musical events: Try to include people with dementia when attending carol services, as singing carols is a great joint activity and can bring back lovely memories.

Accommodate: If you're organising a party or event, have a quiet room set aside and make sure facilities are clearly labelled. Knowing where to go will really help someone with dementia feel more confident.

Be patient: It's easy to get caught up in all the hustle and bustle of Christmas, but if someone seems confused or is taking a bit longer to do something, take a breath and be patient.

To find out more visit www.dementiafriends.org.uk