

# COMMUNITY CAFÉ TOOLKIT: YOUR MANUAL AND TOOLS FOR ESTABLISHING A CAFÉ FOR PEOPLE LIVING WITH DEMENTIA

by **Alzheimer's Australia, New South Wales.** (2016)  
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Read the full article at: <http://www.fightdementia.org.au>



This toolkit was developed as part of Alzheimer's Australia's Dementia-Friendly Communities Initiative and is based on the experiences of Community Cafés across Australia and related literature review from Australia and internationally. It offers a guide on establishing/running a Community Café for persons with dementia (PWDs) and their carers and provides helpful resources such as checklists.

## What are Community Cafés?

Community Cafés provide organised, regular get-togethers in relaxing public spaces to assist PWDs and their carers combat feelings of isolation through increased connections and social support.

## Considerations Before Beginning

### Need

Ascertain if a Café is needed; if PWDs and their carers would attend it; if there are sufficient participants; and possible language barriers. Begin with at least eight participants (i.e., four pairs of PWDs and their carers). This number may increase in time as a result of word of mouth.

### Frequency

In Australia, Cafés are typically held on the same time and day monthly, for 90 minutes to two hours on weekday mornings as it is a more convenient time for seniors. Choose less busy periods in public spaces and schedule at least six months ahead to give participants plenty of notice.

### Format

Whether fixed or informal, enable participants to lead the activity agenda (e.g., formal emotional support, talks by health professionals, and information exchange).

### Participants

It is best to target early to moderate-stage PWDs and their carers. The group size also depends on factors such as available volunteers, finances, and venue capacity.

### Venue

Cafés, clubs, and community spaces are recommended, with

sessions usually held at the same location. Consider aspects such as the preferred day and time, disability access, transport options, and environment (i.e., layout, lighting, and ambience).

### Cost

There may be costs for the venue, food and beverages, facilitator, speaker, and publicity (e.g., flyers).

### Facilitator

He/she could be a paid or volunteer facilitator and should be equipped with the necessary skills.

### Sustainability

To keep the Café ongoing, establish a working group, have a few healthcare professionals take on facilitator roles, recruit and train a few facilitators, and encourage regular meetings.

## Running a Community Café

- Before the first Café of the year, book the venue for the first few months; establish a participant contact list; allocate tasks; prepare a "Welcome Kit" to help participants understand the purpose of the Café and know what to expect; and share a newsletter with key information.
- Before each Café, send reminders to participants via email/call, organise materials, and confirm the volunteers.
- During the Café, facilitators should welcome each participant individually; introduce new participants; organise the food and drink orders; encourage and provide time for participants to talk; and look out for those who may feel "left out" or isolated.
- After the Café, conduct a debrief with facilitators and volunteers to identify any issues. Every year, hand out a simple evaluation form at the last two sessions.

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