

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course covers various aspects of dementia care including the identification, assessment and diagnosis of dementia, person-centred care, communication, interaction and behaviour in dementia care, pharmacological and non-pharmacological interventions in dementia care as well as quality, diversity and inclusion in dementia care. The overall objectives of this programme are to engage participants in learning which is relevant to their profession and to further develop a range of skills and techniques, personal skills and attributes necessary for a successful career in working with people suffering from dementia.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the course programme, students will be able to:

- Policies and strategies on dementia that are designed to create awareness and hence decreases assumptions and stigma towards persons living with dementia and their family.
- The National Dementia Strategic Plan.
- The different types of dementia.
- Signs and symptoms of dementia.
- The impact that different lifestyles might have on dementia.
- The progressive nature of dementia and some of the progressive impairments and difficulties that persons living with dementia might face.
- Identify misinformation, assumptions and stereotypes towards persons living with dementia which may lead to stigma towards them and their family.
- Be aware about the factors in one's lifestyle that may increase the risk of dementia.
- Identify the signs and symptoms that would indicate the need for further investigation in a person without a diagnosis of dementia.

- Explain the importance of recording possible signs and symptoms in a person.
- Recognise that early diagnosis is important and the likely outcomes if diagnosis and treatment are delayed.
- Evaluate, understand the criteria and the process to be used to gain a diagnosis.
- Explain how a diagnosis of dementia may have an impact on the person and the person's family and social network including: psychological and emotional practical, financial the impact of using services and social exclusion.
- Have critical abilities to solve problems through case studies.

## TARGET CANDIDATES

This course is intended for individuals who are already working with people suffering from dementia or who may want to further their career in elderly care.

**DURATION** 6 months

**CREDIT VALUE** 12 ECTS/ECVET

**MODE OF TRAINING** This Award is delivered through interactive lectures with an emphasis on group activities. Case studies and best practices are discussed throughout the programme.

**ASSESSMENT** Assignment, case study, and practice

**AWARDING BODY** Learning Works

## LECTURERS

Ms Rosette Farrugia Bonello

Ms Antoinette Shah

Mr Anthony Scerri

## COURSE STRUCTURE

### MODULE 1: DEMENTIA IDENTIFICATION, ASSESSMENT AND DIAGNOSIS (2 ECTS)

This module provides the learner with knowledge of the ageing brain and the identification of dementia. Learners also cover the different types of dementia, the first signs of this condition and symptoms, the importance of early diagnosis and the impact this condition has on the individual and others in their social network, particularly their immediate family. The focus of this module is also on the risk factors of dementia and prevention, the need for dementia awareness and the National Dementia Strategic Plan.

### MODULE 2: INTRODUCTION TO PERSON-CENTRED CARE IN DEMENTIA (2 ECTS)

This module addresses the fact that all persons living with dementia are first and foremost human beings, with a unique identity, unique personalities and life experiences. This module introduces the person-centred model of care whereby the person living with dementia should be the focus and priority in the model of care. Finding individual solutions for a person living with dementia can help them maintain their independence for as long as possible. Promoting independence is key to improving a person's confidence thus, enabling a heightened sense of purpose.

### MODULE 3: COMMUNICATION, INTERACTION AND BEHAVIOUR IN DEMENTIA CARE (2 ECTS)

This module discusses best-practices techniques on how to best communicate with persons living with dementia. Both verbal and non-verbal communication will be discussed. Adequate care and support depend on effective communication and is vital in any health and social care setting. Key skills, knowledge and attitudes required when communicating and interacting with people living with dementia will be addressed. In addition, a discussion relating to common challenging behaviours that are exhibited by persons living with dementia. Understanding such behaviour and techniques to decrease and/or to avoid such behaviour completely will be addressed.

### MODULE 4: PHARMACOLOGICAL INTERVENTIONS IN DEMENTIA CARE (1 ECTS)

While there is no cure for dementia, some medications that can slow the progression of some types of dementia for a period of time are available. This unit discusses medical treatments that are frequently used as a means of 'treating' what are often called symptoms of dementia such as agitation and aggression. This module looks into the issue that prescriptions of anti-psychotic medications for such behaviours cause increased risk of stroke, falls and death. However, some people living with dementia do experience periods of acute neuropsychiatric symptoms that may need short term, carefully- monitored drug treatment to alleviate symptoms and distress. This module is intended **ONLY** as an awareness of the medication that older persons might take including the side effects that these medications may create. In no way, will participants be responsible to administer any medication.

### MODULE 5: NON-PHARMACOLOGICAL INTERVENTIONS (THERAPEUTIC ACTIVITIES) (3 ECTS)

Non-pharmacological or psycho-social interventions have a range of benefits for persons living with dementia. This module discusses contemporary strategies to dementia therapies. An array of approaches are introduced to support the quality of life of people living with dementia. These include community-based and individual approaches, based on person-centred care and assistive technology. This module also highlights the importance of the 'prepared environment'.

### MODULE 6: PRINCIPLES OF QUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN DEMENTIA CARE (2 ECTS)

This module is taught by using a lecturer-to-student approach and also by hands-on training using different teaching aids. Discussion and critical thinking and evaluation may rises after using such aids and the tutor will at times create the environment for such critical thinking which is a current approach in teaching. Discussions through workshops may create room for peer learning using a student to student approach. A

portfolio of evidence will also be part of a reflective journal throughout their on the job experience. Participants will have the opportunity of a supervised practice placement within a care home. Candidates must report what activities had been done including the aim and the objective. They also must follow up one to three older persons and describe their behaviour and attitudes during the activities, the type of communication used and person-centred care implementation among others. All this will complement the theory and information discussed in class.

## ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Learners need to satisfy the following criteria:

- Ages 18+.
- Level 3 Award in Health Care or
- One-year experience as a care worker.
- Be able to communicate in either English or Maltese. A proficiency numerical and literacy skills test together with a Police Conduct Certificate may also be required.



Candidates may apply for recognition of prior learning (RPL) for up to 40% of the total ECTS of the award in accordance with MFHEA recommendations.

## FUNDING

Applicants may get up to 70% of the fee back through the Get Qualified Scheme.

## PART-TIME

Lectures are held twice a week in the afternoon on a part-time basis.