Dementia Friendly Community Tralee

Tips to create an Inclusive Environment in the Community

Tips to create an Inclusive Environment in the Community
(to enable accessibility for older adults, individuals with dementia, adults and children with cognitive and sensory difficulties)

Start at the entrance outside your property ensure it is clutter free and has adequate lighting, then walk through considering the following:

Seating

An older person or a person living with dementia may need to rest and sit at frequent intervals. Providing seating will enable people to access and use your premises. Ideally there should be appropriate seating every 25-50 meters from the car park/ transport hub throughout the town, this can be in the public realm or instore. Seats should have arms and back support and be the correct height to enable a person to sit into the chair and stand up independently. The seats should not become a potential trip hazard on narrow aisles.

Access to toilets

People need to feel confident that they can access a toilet in a timely manner when in town shopping or using public services. There are always challenges providing toilets for public use but this is an essential facility that supports older people have the confidence to use their town and services.

Don't hide your toilet, sign post it in your premises. Promote it along with other toilets (public and privately provided) in the town.

When providing toilets ensure they are designed appropriately for physical impairment but ALSO ensure they provide for people living with cognitive and sensory impairments.

50% of the over 75's need access to seating and toilets to give them the confidence to use your town.

No contrast e.g. white on white is difficult to see and use

Contrast supports vision and understanding

*Even with no colour vision, contrast is easy to understand*

Lighting

- Increase lighting levels but need to reduce glare (and shadows) to ensure contrast and depth perception
- Entrances should be well lit and as much use of natural light as possible.
- Windows should be cleaned regularly to maximise natural light

Signage

Signage can support a person's confidence to navigate your premises and the reassurance that certain services and facilities exist, such as toilets. Inclusive signage should have the following characteristics to support wayfinding:

- Signs should be clear in bold type face with good contrast between the text and image and background material. The sign should contrast with the surface it is mounted on.
- The background surface should be plain and clear of distraction, pattern and visual clutter
- Signs should be fixed to the doors they refer to not an adjacent surface.
- Signs should be at eye level (approx. 1.2m above finished floor level) and well-lit with no glare
- Be aware of images or icons you are using on signs, highly stylized or abstract images should be avoided. 3D pictograms are recommended over abstract images.
- Think about placing signs at key decision points for someone who is trying to navigate your premises for the first time.
- Signs for toilets and exits are important –if you navigate someone to a toilet make sure you navigate them how to exit a toilet.
- Ensure glass doors are clearly marked.
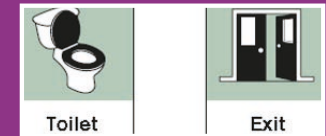
www.ddsarchitects.org recommended signage
(Contrast varies depending on background)

Flooring

- Avoid highly reflective glossy and slippery floor surfaces Flooring should be nonslip, matt finish and consistent in tone throughout the environment.
- Worn flooring or loose mats and rugs can be a trip hazard
- Avoid unnecessary changes in contrast e.g. door mat versus floor as this can be perceived as a step or a hole and may become a fall hazard.
- Changes in material and door thresholds can be mistaken for steps

General Points to Consider

- Remove visual and physical clutter where possible such as unnecessary posters, signage, excess inventory and boxes on floors etc.
- Remove auditory clutter- e.g. soften hard surfaces that can reverberate sound, be conscious of radio, TV etc in background. (Turn down or off as necessary.) Reducing unnecessary noises will help with communication and enable an individual to focus on the tasks in hand.
- Use contrast of tone, not colour, to highlight items that need to be seen. Take black and white photo's of your interior to see contrast difference between colours. Bright reds, yellows etc are NOT necessary to achieve this. See toilet example on page 1.
- Greet older people when they enter your premises and help orientate them.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this advice sheet or would like further information on this topic please contact:

Catherine Murphy,
Occupational Therapist,
Kerry Memory Technology Resource Room.

Email: catherine@bailemhuire.ie
Phone: 086 7809989

Memory Technology
Resource Room

DDS Architects
Dementia Design Specialist

GLOBAL
BRAIN HEALTH
INSTITUTE

Tralee Chamber
Alliance

CORCAIGH CIARRAÍ
CORK KERRY
COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE

HSE