

# Unit 1: Dementia Awareness

Unit code:	J/601/2874
Reference number:	DEM201
QCF Level 2:	BTEC Specialist Course
Credit value:	2
Guided learning hours:	17

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## Unit aim

The aim of the unit is to enable learners to gain knowledge of what dementia is, the different forms of dementia and how others can have an impact on the individual with dementia.

## Unit introduction

As life expectancy rises in the developed world, more cases of dementia are being diagnosed. It is essential, therefore, that health and social care workers are equipped with the knowledge and understanding to support individuals with dementia, contributing to the quality of life to which every individual is entitled. This unit will provide learners with the knowledge and understanding of what dementia is and how it affects individuals. Learners will investigate key features of the models of dementia and consider their application to users of services. Learners will consider signs and symptoms of the more common forms of dementia and those factors which may place an individual at risk.

Learners will also examine the role of support provided by professionals from both statutory and voluntary services, and the place of advocacy in enabling and empowering individuals. Learners will also examine the effects that the behaviour and attitudes of others have on the experience of individuals who have dementia.

*This unit provides learners with opportunities to achieve Functional Skills in English and ICT at Level 2.*

## Assessment requirements

This unit must be assessed in accordance with Skills for Care and Development's QCF Assessment Principles. See *Annexe F* for more details.

## Learning outcomes and assessment criteria

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria determine the standard required to achieve the unit.

### On completion of this unit a learner should:

Learning outcomes	Assessment criteria
1 Understand what dementia is	1.1 explain what is meant by the term 'dementia' 1.2 describe the key functions of the brain that are affected by dementia 1.3 explain why depression, delirium and age-related memory impairment may be mistaken for dementia
2 Understand key features of the theoretical models of dementia	2.1 outline the medical model of dementia 2.2 outline the social model of dementia 2.3 explain why dementia should be viewed as a disability
3 Know the most common types of dementia and their causes	3.1 list the most common causes of dementia 3.2 describe the likely signs and symptoms of the most common causes of dementia 3.3 outline the risk factors for the most common causes of dementia 3.4 identify prevalence rates for different types of dementia
4 Understand factors relating to an individual's experience of dementia	4.1 describe how different individuals may experience living with dementia depending on age, type of dementia, and level of ability and disability 4.2 outline the impact that the attitudes and behaviours of others may have on an individual with dementia

## Unit content

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### 1 Understand what dementia is

*Dementia*: definitions; characteristics; effects on key functions of the brain eg processing information, language, memory, ability to make sound judgements; similarities between the appearance of dementia and depression, delirium and age-related memory impairment eg mild cognitive impairment, apathy, confusion, poor memory, low concentration

### 2 Understand key features of the theoretical models of dementia

*Social model*: interaction of biological and social factors; importance of communities and social networks; role of socio-economic factors, political factors; recognition of personhood; effects of empowerment

*Medical model*: expert control; dependency upon experts; denial of personhood; not recognising the social context, distinction between normal and pathological; individualisation of behaviours; blaming the individual; treatment of the illness

*Dementia as a disability*: dignity of the individual; promotion and protection of rights; needs-led assessment; advocacy; recognition of independent mental capacity; minimisation of potential barriers to support; issues of safeguarding

### 3 Know the most common types of dementia and their causes

*Alzheimer's disease*: causes eg changes in chemistry and structure of the brain, death of brain cells; signs and symptoms eg memory loss related to recent events, familiar faces; confusion about the time of day, familiar objects and places, finding the right word

*Lewy body dementia*: causes eg development of lewy bodies inside the nerve cells, degeneration of brain tissue; signs and symptoms eg memory loss, problem solving, confusion and delirium, severe psychotic symptoms such as persistent hallucinations

*Vascular dementia*: causes eg effects of a stroke, effects of a series of small strokes; signs and symptoms eg memory loss, dizziness, slurred speech, effects on movement, rapid, shuffling steps, leg or arm weakness, loss of bowel and bladder control

*Fronto-temporal dementia*: causes eg accumulation of proteins, development of pick bodies; signs and symptoms eg lack of insight, inability to empathise, changing or inappropriate behaviour, loss of inhibitions, development of compulsive rituals

*Risk factors*: age related eg higher blood pressure, changes to nerve cells, DNA and cell structure, weakness of natural repair mechanisms; genetics; gender differences in the prevalence of different types; medical history eg Down's syndrome, HIV status, multiple sclerosis; environmental/lifestyle factors eg excess alcohol, lack of exercise, exposure to aluminium and other metals, inappropriate diet; prevalence rates of different types of dementia

**4 Understand factors relating to an individual's experience of dementia**

*Factors which affect an individuals' experience of dementia:* symptoms; 'normal' effects of ageing eg loss of hearing, effects on visual acuity, memory loss; levels of ability and disability due to dementia or other conditions; environmental factors eg adaptations to the living space, geographical location; social networks, support of friends and family; financial issues; loss of control; tension between rights and risks; a person-centred approach; impact of discrimination; role of voluntary agencies eg The Alzheimer's Society, Dementia UK; role of statutory services eg speech and language therapists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, pharmacists, nurses, psychologists, Admiral nurses, community psychiatric nurses, care workers, GPs; others eg colleagues, managers; informal carers