

Aging Services of Minnesota  
**GUIDING PRINCIPLES  
FOR DEMENTIA CARE**  
**WORKBOOK**



*Dedicated to Quality  
Dementia Care Programs and  
Informed Choice for Consumers*



**Aging Services  
of Minnesota**

LEADING CHANGE ■ CHANGING LIVES

## Aging Services of Minnesota

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR DEMENTIA CARE

**PREAMBLE:** The *Guiding Principles for Dementia Care* guides our decisions and leads us to create a community of quality dementia care providers and informed consumers.

### **We pledge that our Dementia Care Program will provide quality services and that:**

- Our program has a written statement of its mission and overall philosophy that reflects the needs of the people we serve with dementia.
- Our program promotes the involvement of the people we serve, family, and staff in the development, implementation, and evaluation of care and service delivery, including education and support. The program has an effective assessment and care planning process that responds to the ongoing and changing needs of the person being served.
- All staff, including management, direct care, and other staff, who work with persons with dementia and their families in our dementia care program receive **initial training** that covers the following key components:
  - The organization’s mission statement and overall philosophy
  - Basic information about dementia and its various types, including common symptoms
  - Philosophy and implementation of activity-focused care and services

- Practical approaches for providing care and/or services for those with dementia in a specialized environment
- Communicating with persons with dementia and their support circle
- Problem solving and accommodating challenging behavior and understanding it as a form of communication.

In addition to dementia-specific training, direct care staff must receive additional initial training as required by the applicable requirements, such as the home care regulations.

All staff have ongoing opportunities for **continuing education and support** relating to dementia. For direct care staff, any in-service training should integrate topics focusing on dementia and the needs of persons we serve whenever appropriate.

- Our program provides activity-focused care and specialized programming that are fundamental to the daily experience of the people we serve. This care and programming reflect the individual's preferred lifestyle and functioning level, while providing a sense of usefulness, pleasure and success. A balanced dementia care program includes:
  - Productive and useful activities
  - Self-care activities
  - Leisure and life-enriching activities
- Our program's physical environment and design features support the functioning of those with dementia, accommodate behaviors, maximize functional abilities, promote safety, and encourage independence. The setting also provides a method for monitoring unescorted exiting and for monitoring and responding to the needs of the residents on a 24-hour basis.

- Our program complies with all applicable local, state and federal laws and regulations, such as applicable licensing requirements, the Vulnerable Adults Act, the Housing-with-Services Contract Act, the Dementia Disclosure law and the Dementia Training law.
- Our program, if in a housing-with-services setting, supports and endorses *Aging Services of Minnesota's Housing-with-Services Code of Ethics*. The Code of Ethics guides our decisions and leads us to create a culture of mutual respect, understanding and trust with the people we serve and those who support them.



## INTRODUCTION

The *Guiding Principles for Dementia Care* is a public statement of an organization's commitment to high standards of care and service delivery for persons with various types of dementia. Every provider has such principles and standards, but sometimes they are not clearly stated and understood by everyone in—and outside—the organization. This workbook will help you understand how the *Guiding Principles for Dementia Care* relate to your organization's underlying values as well as how they are reflected in what you do each day.

Aging Services of Minnesota's *Guiding Principles for Dementia Care* is designed to help staff of specialized dementia care programs provide quality services that focus on the individuals being served and that treat them with respect and dignity. It has been developed by providers who, like you, are striving to achieve the highest quality of care for their consumers. By reflecting on each area identified in the *Guiding Principles*, you will no doubt see how your organization has already integrated many of the values into your organizational operations as well as areas where you may want to improve. Aging Services of Minnesota's *Guiding Principles of Dementia Care* represents an ideal. The policies and standards that result from reaching to meet this ideal will continue to evolve as each provider seeks to continually improve the quality of its services.

When your organization adopts these *Guiding Principles for Dementia Care*, this program should become your guide to helping consumers understand what standards they can expect from your organization.

## WORKBOOK SUGGESTIONS

This workbook can be used with board members/owner(s), management and other staff for both decision-making and learning. You can complete the work all at once, in sections, or one principle at a time. Whatever your work pace, leave enough time for discussion about each principle, and the way your organization has addressed it. The process of adopting the *Guiding Principles for Dementia Care* provides an opportunity to explore, be creative and share perspectives on how to best implement these principles within your own program.

Suggested steps for effective use of this workbook:

1. First, take some time to think about way each principle relates to the provision of dignified and respectful care of persons with dementia. Write down your thoughts and be prepared to share them with others in your organization.
2. Identify ways that people could recognize how you implement these principles in your organization. Be specific. Instead of saying “We provide an environment for people with dementia,” you might identify the specific features in your setting that create a calm and home-like environment and the specific features and systems your program has to reduce the chance of unescorted exiting.

3. Once you have listed ways your organization addresses the *Guiding Principles for Dementia Care*, you are ready for the next step. In order to be part of the *Guiding Principles for Dementia Care* program, your organization's Board of Directors/ Owner(s) must adopt the *Guiding Principles for Dementia Care*. A written resolution, signed by the Chairperson of the Board (or the Board's authorized person or the owner(s)) and the CEO or manager of the organization, should be forwarded to:

Aging Services of Minnesota  
2550 University Avenue South, Suite 350 South  
St. Paul, MN 55114-1900

In return you will receive a copy of the *Guiding Principles for Dementia Care* certificate for display.

**Step One.** Specialized Care and Quality Services are two themes addressed by the *Guiding Principles for Dementia Care*. Before reviewing how your organization implements the *Guiding Principles*, take some time to think about what specialized dementia care and quality services mean to you personally.

The dictionary defines **specialized** as “designed or fitted for one particular purpose or occupation.”

- In your day-to-day professional life, what does providing specialized care mean to you?
- Why do people with dementia need specialized care?

**Quality** can be defined as “a measure of superiority or excellence.”

- In your role at work, how do you know if the quality of your service is superior or excellent? How do you strive to reach a high level of quality?
- Do you think everyone in your organization shares the same definition of what constitutes high quality services? How does the definition vary from person to person?

**Now move to Step 2.**

---

**STEP 2.** This step can be best completed in group discussion. Be sure to plan enough time in one or more sessions to review and respond to the *Principles* and the questions. In a group, identify all the ways your organization implements these principles, using examples your consumers will understand.

**Aging Services of Minnesota  
GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR DEMENTIA CARE**

**PREAMBLE**

**PREAMBLE:** *The Guiding Principles for Dementia Care guides our decisions and leads us to create a community of quality dementia care providers and informed consumers.*

**PRINCIPLE 1 – MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY**

Our program has a written statement of its mission and overall philosophy that reflects the needs of the people we serve with dementia.

*A program's written statement of its mission and overall philosophy directs its operations and guides the decision-making of the organization. A written copy of the mission statement and overall philosophy should be given to residents or participants, their family and/or the client's designated representative. Staff should also receive and understand the program's mission statement and philosophy. Disclosure of the program's overall philosophy is required under the dementia care disclosure law, Minnesota Statutes §325F.72.*



## PRINCIPLE 2 – ASSESSMENT, CARE PLANNING AND INVOLVEMENT OF THOSE WE SERVE AND THEIR FAMILIES

Our program promotes the involvement of the people we serve, family, and staff in the development, implementation, and evaluation of care and service delivery, including education and support. The program has an effective assessment and care planning process that responds to the ongoing and changing needs of the person being served.

*Developing an effective care plan and service plan for each individual, based on a complete assessment, is imperative when caring for those with dementia. Each individual should have a careful assessment with input from the social circle that supports his or her care and services. This social circle may include the person being served, family, physician, friends, and staff. The assessment process should result in a detailed plan of care outlining areas of concern and associated goals with attention to the unique needs, preferences and life history of the individual. There should be a process to update the assessment and care and service plan as the individual's needs change. Careful consideration must be given to the comments, concerns, and expectations of the person being served, family, physician, friends, and staff.*

1. How does your program involve the person being served, family members, staff and others in the person's support circle in the assessment of needs and the development of the care plan/service plan?:



## PRINCIPLE 3 – STAFF TRAINING

All staff, including management, direct care, and other staff, who work with persons with dementia and their families in our dementia care program receive **initial training** that covers the following key components:

- The organization’s mission statement and overall philosophy
- Basic information about dementia, and its various types including common symptoms
- Philosophy and implementation of activity-focused care and services
- Practical approaches for providing care and/or services for those with dementia in a specialized environment
- Communicating with persons with dementia and their support circle
- Problem solving and accommodating challenging behavior and understanding it as a form of communication

In addition to dementia-specific training, direct care staff receive additional initial training as required by the applicable requirements, such as the home care regulations.

All staff have ongoing opportunities for **continuing education and support** relating to dementia. For direct care staff, any in-service training should integrate topics focusing on dementia and the needs of persons we serve whenever appropriate.

An essential component of providing specialized care and service for those with dementia is providing the tools necessary for all staff to be successful in the delivery of such specialized care and services. It is imperative that organizations provide thorough initial training to all staff to prepare them for the special needs of the disease and to provide practical tips and approaches to implement in their daily routines, activities of daily living, and interactions with the persons they serve. Additionally, staff must receive education in the disease process and its symptoms, the concept of activity-focused **care**,

tools for effective communication, and problem solving techniques. This training should emphasize respect and dignity for the individuals being served, recognizing each person's unique history, legacy and lifestyle preferences. Organizations must find creative methods through training to capture and preserve these legacies while providing supportive and caring environments.

*As your caregivers and other staff become more familiar with your setting and the unique needs of each person being served, continuing education opportunities must be provided to refresh and enhance staff knowledge and skills. In addition to continuing education, all staff members need sources of support to handle stress, family dynamics, and care and service delivery successes and frustrations. Organizations must stay committed to all staff working with those with dementia in order to provide opportunities for personal and professional development, which will help retain long-term staff and maintain the continuity of care for the persons being served and their families.*

1. What topics are covered in the initial training provided to staff when they are hired?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Does this initial training cover the following topics?:
  - \_\_\_ The organization's mission statement and overall philosophy
  - \_\_\_ Basic information about dementia, including common symptoms
  - \_\_\_ Philosophy and implementation of activity-focused care and services
  - \_\_\_ Practical approaches for providing care and/or services including assistance with activities of daily living, for those with dementia in a specialized environment



## PRINCIPLE 4 — ACTIVITIES

Our program provides activity-focused care and specialized programming that are fundamental to the daily experience of the person being served and reflect the individual's preferred lifestyle and functioning level, while providing a sense of usefulness, pleasure and success. A balanced dementia care program includes:

- Productive and useful activities
- Self-care activities
- Leisure and life-enriching activities

*Individuals with dementia should be encouraged to participate in productive activities offering opportunities to contribute to their own daily life experiences while providing a sense of usefulness and familiarity. Productive activities may include: assisting with meal preparation, laundry, housekeeping, outdoor chores, and other miscellaneous daily activities.*

*Self-care activities include the individual's participation in his or her own personal cares and hygiene, including bathing, dressing, grooming, oral cares, nail care, toileting, ambulation, medication management, and dining.*

*A well-balanced life includes activities such as hobbies, personal interests, fun, and relaxation. Programs should encourage individuals with dementia to maintain their lifestyle preferences and engage in leisure and life-enriching activities including: playing games, music, woodworking/crafts, reading, television, dancing, movies, outings, various outdoor activities, sporting events, and spiritual gatherings.*

1. Describe the specialized programming your program offers, including the frequency of activities and whether they are individualized or group activities:

2. Give two examples showing how your program is designed to reflect the individual's preferred lifestyle and functioning level, while providing a sense of usefulness, pleasure and success:

A. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. List some "useful and productive" activities that you have incorporated into your program:

A. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## **PRINCIPLE 5 – PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT AND DESIGN FEATURES**

Our program’s physical environment and design features support the functioning of those with dementia, accommodate behaviors, maximize functional abilities, promote safety, and encourage independence. The setting also provides a method for monitoring unescorted exiting and for monitoring and responding to the needs of the residents on a 24-hour basis.

A significant consequence of the cognitive changes that occur in dementia is the impaired ability of individuals to perceive and make sense of the world around them. Therefore, organizations must structure that world to support the person’s remaining abilities and give them every opportunity to be successful. Poorly designed environments—such as those that are very noisy or busy—can have a negative impact on those with dementia. Environments must be supportive and recognize that those with dementia generally are sensitive to stimulation and that they will be more comfortable and possibly function better in familiar, comfortable surroundings.

Personal safety and security are imperative in caring for those with dementia as a result of their declining intellectual functioning and loss of the ability to make good decisions and use good judgment. Organizations should provide a method for monitoring the safety of the persons being served at all times while they are on-site in a way that best meets the needs of the persons participating in the program.



## PRINCIPLE 6 – REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

Our program complies with all applicable local, state and federal laws and regulations, such as applicable licensing requirements, the Vulnerable Adults Act, the Housing-with-Services Contract Act, the Dementia Disclosure law and the Dementia Training law.

*Organizations that provide specialized care for those with dementia must comply with all applicable laws and regulations in order to meet the minimum standard of care and service. Additionally, the Guiding Principles for Dementia Care encourages organizations to strive for superior care and service delivery that goes above and beyond the minimum standards required by law.*

1. Identify the major laws your program must meet (include licensing, disclosure and other laws designed to protect consumers as well as those laws designed to protect employees). If a particular staff person or position has primary responsibility for compliance with certain requirements (e.g., safety officer), identify that responsible person or position:
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Identify the systems you have in place or the actions you take to assure compliance with these laws (e.g., self audits, training, etc.)

## PRINCIPLE 7 – ADOPTION OF THE HOUSING-WITH-SERVICES CODE OF ETHICS

Our program, if in a housing-with-services setting, supports and endorses Aging Services of Minnesota's *Housing-with-Services Code of Ethics*. The Code of Ethics guides our decisions and leads us to create a culture of mutual respect, understanding and trust with the people we serve and those who support them.

*A Code of Ethics is a public statement of an organization's guiding principles and the standards of conduct based on those principles. Every provider has such principles and standards, but sometimes they are not clearly stated and understood by everyone in – and outside – the organization. Through the Code of Ethics organizations are striving to achieve the highest quality of care and service for their consumers.*

1. If your program operates within a registered housing-with-services establishment, have you formally adopted the Code of Ethics of Aging Services of Minnesota or an equivalent Code of Ethics?
  
2. The Code of Ethics must be re-adopted by organizations' Boards of Directors every two years? When will your organization need to re-adopt the Code of Ethics? (If you aren't certain, contact Alecia Crumpler at Aging Services of Minnesota at [acrumpler@agingservicesmn.org](mailto:acrumpler@agingservicesmn.org).)

**Step Three.** Once you have listed ways your organization demonstrates your commitment to the *Guiding Principles for Dementia Care*, you are ready for the next step. In order to be part of the *Guiding Principles for Dementia Care* program, your organization's Board of Directors/Owner(s) must adopt the *Principles*. A written resolution, signed by the Owner or Chairperson of the Board (or person authorized by the Board) and the CEO or manager of the organization, should be forwarded to:

Aging Services of Minnesota  
2550 University Avenue South, Suite 350 South  
St. Paul, MN 55114-1900

Along with the copy of your resolution, please include information about the name and address of the organization, building(s), unit(s) or program(s) that have adopted the *Principles*, as well as the name of any larger organization or corporation that sponsors the unit or program. In return, Aging Services will send you a *Guiding Principles for Dementia Care* certificate with the name of your organization, suitable for hanging in a public area.

## LIVING THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF DEMENTIA CARE

The *Guiding Principles for Dementia Care* should not be treated as a static document that organizations simply adopt and post on their wall. Aging Services of Minnesota highly encourages organizations that adopt these *Principles* to use them as a vehicle to help staff, volunteers, board members, customers and others think about and discuss how the organizations conduct their business and strive to continually improve the quality of their dementia care services.

Aging Services of Minnesota encourages organizations that adopt the *Guiding Principles for Dementia Care* to establish a process to regularly examine how the organization and its staff, volunteers and board/owner(s) address each principle. Because this should be an on-going process of self-examination, Aging Services will ask organizations to adopt the *Guiding Principles of Dementia Care* every two years. When it is time for your organization to review its commitment to the *Principles*. You can use the workbook to review how your program addresses the Principles. Aging Services of Minnesota looks forward to working with your organization to make these *Guiding Principles for Dementia Care* a standard for Minnesota providers with specialized dementia care services.

## Sample Board of Directors Resolution to Adopt Aging Services of Minnesota's Guiding Principles for Dementia Care

Whereas, the (name of organization) Board of Directors/ Owner(s) is committed to providing quality services to the citizens of (name of community or region);

Whereas, our mission statement and overall philosophy of care and service reflect our commitment to providing quality dementia care for the people we serve;

Whereas, our dementia care program has been carefully designed to address the preferences and functioning level of the persons we serve and to provide them a sense of usefulness, pleasure and success while maximizing functional abilities, promoting safety and encouraging independence;

Whereas, we believe that if all people employed by or volunteering for (name of organization), as well as the family members understand the significance of focusing on the individual, the resulting services we provide will be sensitive, caring and of superior quality;

Whereas, as a member of Aging Services of Minnesota, we have a compact with our peer provider community to strive always to offer quality services;

Therefore, we, the Board of Directors/Owner(s) of (name of organization) do hereby adopt Aging Services of Minnesota's *Guiding Principles for Dementia Care* and direct our employees and volunteers to adhere to the *Principles* in all that they do as a member of this organization.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
*Chair of the Board/Owner (or authorized person)*

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
*CEO/Manager*

**Notes:**



Aging Services of Minnesota (*formerly Minnesota Health & Housing Alliance*) is Minnesota's largest association of aging services organizations. Our 680+ members serve over 40,000 Minnesotans every day in settings across the continuum from their home to congregate housing to assisted living to care centers. Aging Services members are diverse but share a common focus on person-directed living, missions of service to their communities and choice in older adult services.



Aging Services staff is available to answer questions or provide assistance to your organization.

Contact us at:

## **Aging Services of Minnesota**

**2550 University Avenue West, Suite 350 South  
St. Paul, MN 55114-1900**

**651.645.4545 • 800.462.5368 • FAX: 651.645.0002**

**[www.agingervicesmn.org](http://www.agingervicesmn.org)**