

	GEORGIA DIVISION OF AGING SERVICES SERVICES MANUAL			
	Chapter:	7000	Effective Date:	12/15/2023
	Section Title:	Dementia Care Specialist Program Three Domains of Concentration		
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SUMMARY STATEMENT

Three Domains of Concentration

The Dementia Care Specialist (DCS) will use an integrative approach with the help of Area Agency on Aging (AAA) staff, community professionals, care partners and people living with dementia (PLWD) to create an inclusive environment. To increase dementia awareness, build a dementia capable community, support care partners and PLWD, the DCS will focus on three domains: education and awareness, community outreach and partnerships, and supporting care partners and PLWD.

1. Education and Awareness

The Dementia Care Specialist is responsible for educating staff within the AAA, community partners, care partners, and the PLWD. Through education, early detection, and skill building, the AAA staff and community partners will have the knowledge to identify and work effectively with PLWD and their care partners. The Division of Aging (DAS) will provide resources, guidance, and selection of content.

A key element of this domain is to keep AAA staff informed, educated, and up to date on dementia training, resources, and skills. Dementia training for AAA staff must include dementia education and knowledge of resources and referral opportunities.

DCS will also train community members at large to be dementia aware, to build dementia capable communities, and support PLWD and care partners.

Suggested education topics include:

Knowledge Topics:

- Definition of dementia
- Different types of dementia, including mild cognitive impairment
- General stages of dementia
- Brain changes in dementia

- Disparities in dementia prevalence and population level information
- Common symptoms of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias
- Needs of caregivers
- Needs of persons living with dementia
- Importance of screening and diagnosis with a focus on early detection and diagnosis
- Normal aging versus dementia
- Conditions that mimic dementia
- Brain health, dementia risk factors, and prevention
- Safety at home or in another environment

Skill Topics:

- How to assess for communication and challenging responses
- How to recognize someone who has dementia
- How to interact with someone who has dementia

Services and Resources:

- AAA Programs and Services
- Dementia capable communities or dementia capable business trainings
- Community resources for PLWDs and caregivers

As the program grows, it will be important for dementia education to expand into education at the college/technical level, high school health career classes, and first responder trainings.

Education and training can be delivered through a variety of methods such as but not limited to in-person and virtual training, community fairs, community memory screenings, personalized training to business specific concepts, and webinars.

2. Community Outreach and Partnerships

The DCS will serve as a catalyst for developing and implementing strategies to create dementia capable communities. As the leader of the DCS Program, the DCS is responsible for building or joining a dementia-focused community coalition that will meet on a regular basis to exchange ideas, strengthen resources, and build new partnerships. The coalition will meet quarterly (at a minimum) and can be in person, virtual or a hybrid meeting.

People/businesses to be included in the coalition include but are not limited to:

- Medical personnel
- Brain health specialists
- Care partners
- PLWDs
- Home Care Agencies
- Social Workers
- Home Health Care Providers
- Hospice Providers
- Attorneys
- Real Estate Specialists
- Grocery Store Managers
- Bank Branch Managers
- Pharmacists
- Memory Care Directors
- Assisted Living Directors
- Owners of Personal Care Homes
- Direct care staff

3. Supporting Care Partners and People Living with Dementia

- This domain can be achieved by building a supportive dementia capable community, with informed care partners, and by creating safe, supportive spaces throughout the community.
- Encourage memory screenings and support using a diagnostic evaluation.
- Offer referrals to support services that will allow PLWD to live in their own environment.
- Offer referrals to research opportunities.
- Connect care partners and PLWD to community resources such as memory cafes, support groups, and physical and cognitive engagement opportunities.
- Provide information about dementia, communication strategies, safety considerations, and care planning.
- Offer training on how to understand and respond to challenging reactions.
- Provide referrals to support groups, respite for care partner, research opportunities, and other community resources.