

At the FMNs we have been discussing making health services more dementia friendly. We would be interested in your experiences and ideas to put into a document to send to healthcare managers and staff.

Here are some of our experiences and examples of dementia friendly practise:

- Was flexible and offered an appointment that suited me best. For example, able to offer a morning appointment that matched my preference
- I was given a “This is ME” leaflet produced by the Alzheimer’s Society when I informed the doctor that I have dementia. The Doctor was then able to understand me best and knew how to address me in a manner respectful to me.
- Treated as a person, sensitive to situation and emotions.
- When referred to a new doctor they did a thorough check of memory assessments as well as looking at physical health. Was really appreciated as the Doctor then was able to provide the best support matched for me as well as identifying a physical problem that may have gone unnoticed. (Primary?)
- Listened and observed in an assessment. Observed that it would be best to stop the assessment on the day and reviewed for 2 weeks later.
- Take you seriously with no pre-judgement.
- Gave time to family members, to inform them and had time to answer any questions
- Gave time for you to talk and actively listened
- Was able to provide a lot of support while not being patronising and keeping my independence.
- Making sure family member (wife) was there when giving out important information.
- Medical dispenser in blister packs with written instructions

Here are our negative experiences that could have been more dementia-friendly:

- Was referred to a hospital in West Kent that required a very long and extensive travel. Long wait in the waiting room only to be seen for a short, rushed appointment. Felt like a complete waste of time.
 - Would have been a lot better to be seen at a closer hospital and allowed the time for a full appointment.
- Problems when the receptionist won't allow you to book a double appointment, even when the Doctor recommends it.
 - Has occurred more than once with many different individuals.
- Need for greater communication: Doctor went away for a year of alternative work and no one informed me.
- It seems like some G.P's have poor knowledge of certain Psychiatric medication. On reviewing the medication there seemed to be poor knowledge of the side effects and ways to manage the side effects.
 - Often it resulted in family / friends or on own initiative to alter the way medication was prescribed, such as to take it at different time of the day or with food. Small detail and information should have been advised from the doctor rather from other sources.
 - Main drug discussed: donepezil
- Went for a year and a half with the wrong medication. There were no regular check-ups or reviews.
 - Needs to have regular review appointments, even if it just involves a phone call.
- On Psychiatry appointment letters it would be really good to include a reminder about what the appointment is for, family members can attend and to bring any questions you may have.
- Lack of care and attention
- Once stated that I have dementia I was treated like a child. Being checked up on regularly on small things like whether I have ate or not.
 - Might be helpful to have a brief description in from of "dementia" to help professionals – "I have mild dementia"
- Treated by diagnosis and not as a person.

We look forward to hearing your thoughts and ideas.

Yours Sincerely,

The FMNs