



All Together Series

Compassionate Dementia Inclusive Communities

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Wed Mar 11th 2026, 12pm-1pm

Presentation Key Points	Discussion
<p>Project Background</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The project aims to address the growing demographic challenge of dementia care, with approximately 750,000 Canadians currently living with dementia and family caregivers providing over 580 million hours of support annually. • This project emerged from observing successful compassionate communities across Canada while recognizing that many initiatives did not adequately meet the needs of persons living with dementia. • Team is creating a comprehensive toolkit by integrating three established frameworks. • The first element, the Compassionate Communities approach, draws from the BC Center for Palliative Care's existing Compassionate Communities toolkit that helps organizations measure and develop qualities of compassionate communities. • The second element incorporates the Dementia Inclusion Movement, based on work from the Building Capacity in Dementia project conducted by University of British Columbia Vancouver, Lakehead University, and community partners including persons with lived experience. • The third element integrates the NAV CARE program, an evidence-based volunteer initiative in development since 2010 that trains volunteers to support people with declining health age in place. • The toolkit is supported by key knowledge partnerships • 6 project sites: Greater Trail Hospice Society, Prince George Hospice and Palliative Care Society, Brella Community Services Society, Age Friendly Cold Lake (Alberta), Bruce Peninsula Hospice Society (Ontario), and Newfoundland Health Authority. • Five of the six sites serve rural or remote populations, highlighting the project's focus on underserved communities. • Project team supports each site through bi-weekly mentoring, a community of practice for the sites and reporting back and forth with sites.
<p>Implementation Steps</p>	<p><u>Building Partnerships:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each site responsible for recruiting two additional organizations to form their leadership team, creating inter-organizational partnerships essential to success • Partners represent diverse sectors: community support services, formal healthcare providers, United Way chapters, Alzheimer's societies, municipalities, faith-based orgs • Sites also developed advisory committee with intentional representation

- Committees served not merely as advisors but as champions and ambassadors passionate about supporting community initiatives.

Community Assessment

- Some communities did asset mapping to inform partnerships to build upon and look at which ones to develop and be part of advisory board
- Sites did environmental scans, inventory of local resources and gaps related to supporting people living with dementia and care partners.
- Sites completed [Compassionate Community Index](#), a survey tool modified to outline key ideals to inform and assist leadership in assessing the level of readiness and commitment to build an ideal compassionate, dementia inclusive community. The tool assessed five ideals: awareness and advocacy, attitudes and commitment, leadership and capacity, networks and connections, and opportunities recognition
- Sites did survey with advisory committees and some included wider public as well. Most responses indicated "just started" and "on the road to becoming" more compassionate and inclusive. Leadership and capacity received the highest rankings, while opportunities and recognition received the lowest, suggesting communities could leverage their leadership strengths to strengthen awareness-raising activities

Volunteer Training

- Done through NAVCARE training and other relevant training. The existing program was already in place the community partner organizations and this then became the growth and the fodder for expanding the elements of training this approach in the communities

Visioning Implementing a plan

- Interventions that promote awareness, building the knowledge, spread understanding about dementia, and interventions that would provide practical support for people living with dementia and their caregivers.
- The project sites implemented diverse and creative interventions tailored to their communities

Greater Trail Hospice Society

- Hosted "Evening to Remember" community awareness event, featuring education about dementia, sensory loss, and memory making.
- Second major intervention was "What I Need to Thrive" form, envisioned by a care partner on the advisory committee. This communicates essential care information to healthcare providers, including triggers, calming techniques, personal preferences, and how to provide dignified, person-centered care. The form is widely shared in the community and used as an education tool for care providers.

Bruce Peninsula Hospice (Wyerton, Ontario)

- Trained 15 local businesses in dementia-friendly practices

- Hosted a community shopping event where trained businesses welcomed people living with dementia, caregivers, and families
- Participants described the experience as feeling like a “welcome coming home”
- Implemented Food for Thought in a local grocery store to raise dementia awareness and encourage story-sharing and questions

Prince George Hospice

- Developed Connecting Minds to Compassionate Hearts for people in the early stages of dementia
- Trained companion volunteers to provide one-to-one and group support
- Offered creative and social activities, including a mini-Olympics, to foster belonging and engagement
- Created caregiver support services linking peer support with community resources to build resilience and capacity

Age Friendly Cold Lake

- Partnered with the Cold Lake Museum on Walk Down Memory Lane
- Displayed large historical photographs in a long-term care facility to support reminiscence
- Engaged volunteers, including local high school students, to promote intergenerational connection
- Hosted a grief and bereavement café
- Developed a caregiver immigrant toolkit focused on end-of-life care resources and self-care

Brella Community Services

- Integrated social prescribing, Community Connectors, and NAVCARE into coordinated volunteer-led support
- Hosted culturally specific dementia and caregiver support for the South Asian community through the weekly Sani Café
- Offered caregiver education sessions
- Delivered fitness programming, including Mediboxing: Box to Fit

Newfoundland and Labrador Health Authority

- Led Pathways to Support: Creating Compassionate Dementia-Inclusive Communities in Primary Care
- Co-designed clear referral pathways for primary care
- Standardized referral forms and curated vetted community resources
- Trained and onboarded family practices
- Deployed clinical materials to improve system coordination and access

Evaluation & Sustainability

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the project concludes in April 2026, sites focusing on sustainability and celebrating achievements through community cafés that engage people living with dementia, caregivers, healthcare providers, advisory teams, boards, and the public. • These cafes will also raise awareness, strengthen partnerships, gather feedback, and help to build relationships that extend beyond project funding. • The project team is collecting data and learnings from all six sites to inform the Compassionate Dementia-Inclusive Communities Toolkit. The updated toolkit will integrate practical lessons from implementation, including challenges, successful strategies, and community-specific adaptations, and will be made available to support replication by other community organizations. • Sites demonstrated exceptional creativity and engagement across sectors, with the inclusion of people with lived experience ensuring interventions remained person-centred. • Moving forward, sites are exploring ways to sustain volunteer programs, partnerships, and awareness-raising activities without dedicated project funding.
<p>Discussion, Q&A</p>	<p>Q: What was the thing that you took away from this project that really made a big difference for you?</p> <p>A: One of the things is how often non-profit community service providers work in isolation, and how often the mandate for scope of services or mission that each community organization has was really augmented through this. Working together with other partners is not to be taken for granted. I love seeing communities discovering other community works, the shared resources, the assets of people, the innovation, the creativity. There's no stopping to creativity, whether it was using a winery event to create dementia-inclusive awareness or other initiatives. Now, having said that, there's bumps in learning how to work together, and most organizations had some bumps they had to sort out, but that didn't stop the direction and intent of what they were hoping to do.</p> <p>Q: Could you please tell us more about bereavement support offered, especially while folks' loved ones were approaching end of life?</p> <p>A: Several sites held grief and bereavement support. In Brella, caregiver support and bereavement support was around supporting people in early diagnosis, self-led by people living with dementia diagnosis. There's grief and loss that embodies that journey. Cold Lake's grief and bereavement support was not just for people living with dementia, but also family members and family caregivers.</p> <p>Q: Could you please tell us more about the <i>What I Need to Thrive</i> form?</p> <p>A: When people with dementia are admitted to a facility or emergency, they're usually in crisis or can't communicate their needs well. If the caregiver can fill out the Thrive form to explain the best way to approach this person, what they like to be called, how to give medications, how to help them remain independent, and how to support personal care, then that can be handed to caregivers in facilities and they've got a head start on providing dignified, calm, and respectful care. The Thrive form has a cover sheet explaining its use and the actual form the caregiver fills out.</p> <p>Q: What kind of education did the organizations in Wyerton receive in order to qualify as dementia-friendly businesses?</p>

	<p>A: Wyerton did a whole business training using some of the Alzheimer's Society support education, and they created an education day in awareness. More specific details can be found from them directly and through Gloria</p> <p>Q: Is there any consideration around supporting individuals living with intellectual development disabilities and navigating their dementia journeys?</p> <p>A: In this particular project, that has not been part of the dialogue. However, I will take it back to our project group as one of the considerations for future work. It's really important to know that we have people of all diversities and all illness trajectories, and that is an important one not to overlook.</p> <p>Q: Does the Thrive form include historical information like where they worked or if they attended residential school, and was it done in consultation with any First Nations entity?</p> <p>A: At this point, it's geared just to that personal individual. There isn't anything specifically cultural that might be applied to that person, but I think it could be added into the form. I would ask that when it's sent out, it be sent in a Word document form so people can adjust it and personalize it to their own communities.</p> <p>Q: I wondered if there was an inclusion of RCMP in the big picture of a community assessment, for when community members who have dementia are targeted because they behave or react differently.</p> <p>A: What we have in our community [Trail] is a wander registry that we can give to caregivers, and they can register their person with dementia with the RCMP. So if the person does wander or becomes confused, they can be helped. I can send that to Melody, and if people want to copy that and integrate it with their RCMP detachments, that would be great.</p>
<p>Resources</p>	<p>Links for resources, contact information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Gloria Puurveen (Project Manager): gloria.puurveen@ubc.ca • BC Compassionate Communities Toolkit. The Compassionate Community Index can be used by community group to help assess the level of readiness in their community to become a compassionate community. The survey results help identify strength and areas that need further work. The index can also help evaluate new initiatives as they grow. • Email: nav.care@ubc.ca , Nav-CARE is a volunteer navigation program that uses specially trained volunteers to work with people in the home over months to years to connect them to community and resources. Over multiple studies, Nav-CARE has been shown to have a positive impact on people and their care partners who receive services. • What I need to Thrive: Thrive form cover, Thrive Form • Wandering Person Registry (Trail & Greater District RCMP)