

Course Information Sheet

Dementia: Supporting Sleep

Course Code	AOC17066-B-R-NZ	Course Series	Dementia
Learning Pathway	Developing		
Course Description	<p>People living with dementia can experience difficulty sleeping during the night and this can have a negative impact on their health and well-being. This course will explore strategies to support a person to sleep.</p> <p>This course explains how sleep patterns and routines change as people get older, and how people living with dementia are particularly affected. Practical strategies you can use to assist those you support to get to sleep are presented, with a focus on providing person-centred care to ensure the person feels supported.</p>		
Subjects covered include	<p>Sleep Routine – Sleep Cycle – Dementia – Effects of lack of sleep – Napping – Body Clock – Confusion – Disorientation – Environment – Bedding – Internal Thermostat – Cues – Reassurance – Body Language – Person-centred care options</p>		
Target Audience	All Staff		

Learning Outcomes

After viewing this course, participants should be able to:

- Explain the effects dementia may have on a person’s ability to sleep
- Outline strategies to support a person with dementia to sleep

Did You Know?

- Dementia causes changes in the way a person experiences the world. No two people have dementia in the exact same way, so what needs to be done to support them to sleep will not be the same. Up to 50% of people with dementia have difficulty sleeping.
- Good sleep is important for people with dementia because it improves their daytime function.
- Do not force them to be in bed or to sleep if a person really wants to be up at night. They need an accepting environment that helps them feel safe.

Source: <https://www.sleephealthfoundation.org.au/pdfs/Dementia-and-Sleep.pdf>

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Subject Matter Expert

Professor Colm Cunningham is Director of The Dementia Centre, HammondCare, with an Australian and International team of over 200 staff. The centre’s priorities are building design, understanding the causes of behaviour, life engagement, models of care and end of life care. Colm has published extensively and has over 30 years’ experience in older age care. Colm is a Conjoint Associate Professor at the University of NSW in the School of Public Health and Community Medicine and a Visiting Fellow in Dementia Design and Practice at the University of Edinburgh School of Health in Social Science.

Key Definitions

Body Clock or Circadian Rhythm	The body’s natural, internal system, designed to regulate feelings of sleepiness and wakefulness over a 24-hour period. ¹
Sleep Routine	A variety of different practices used to assist people to achieve a quality night-time sleep and full alertness during the day. ² It is important to acknowledge that the sleep routine of some people prior to entering care included being awake at night (e.g. shift workers). Therefore, it is important that these people are supported to be awake at night whilst receiving the same care options.
Sundowning	When people with dementia become more confused, restless or insecure late in the afternoon or early evening. ³
Visual Cue	A phrase, picture or object placed where the person with dementia can see it to prompt or to trigger their memory (e.g. care workers wearing pyjamas act as a visual that it is night time).

Active Learning Hours

This course and the accompanying assessment may require up to three hours of active learning. It is the learner’s responsibility to calculate how many hours of active learning have taken place. The course viewed must be relevant to the care worker or nurse’s context of practice for it to be considered continuing professional development. Certificates are available from your coordinator.

¹ <https://www.sleep.org/articles/circadian-rhythm-body-clock/>

² <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/conditionsandtreatments/sleep-hygiene>

³ <https://www.dementia.org.au/about-dementia/carers/behaviour-changes/sundowning>

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Resources to Support Your Learning

[Alzheimer's New Zealand](#)

[Health Navigator NZ](#)

[Ministry of Health NZ](#)

[Sundowning: Phenomenology, Pathophysiology, and Treatment Approaches](#)

[What to know about sleep deprivation](#)

DISCLAIMER:

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