



# Supporting people with dementia in your golf coaching

Key information for you to consider when working with people with dementia

## What is dementia?

Dementia is caused when the brain is damaged by diseases, such as Alzheimer's disease, or a series of strokes. It is not a normal part of the ageing. There are many different types of dementia, but the most common type is Alzheimer's disease. Dementia is progressive, which means it gets worse over time. Different types of dementia tend to affect people in different ways, especially in the early stages. Often it may be hard to know if someone has dementia especially in the early stages. That's why it's really important to provide good support and information to everyone.

A person with dementia might:

- have problems with their day-to-day memory for example, difficulties recalling events that happened recently
- have problems concentrating, planning or organising – for example, difficulties making decisions solving problems or carrying out a sequence of tasks
- have problems with language for example, difficulty following a conversation or finding the right word
- be confused about time or place – for example, losing track of the day or date, or becoming confused about where they are (even in familiar places)
- have visual perceptual difficulties – for example, difficulty judging distances or misinterpreting patterns or reflections



- show changes in their mood such as becoming frustrated or irritable, withdrawn, anxious, easily upset or unusually sad
- show changes in behaviour such as repetitive questioning, pacing, restlessness or agitation
- Some people with dementia may find that their symptoms can vary a lot from one day to another.

## Living well with dementia

A diagnosis of dementia does not mean it is not possible to live well. Many people with dementia continue to be active and carry on with the things they enjoy. Even as dementia progresses, people can lead active, healthy lives, carry on with their hobbies and enjoy friendships and relationships. Someone with dementia may forget an appointment or tell you the same joke twice, but their condition does not stop them doing the things that matter the most. However, as dementia progresses people will need support from others.

## What should you consider in your coaching?

- Speak to the person and not their disability or condition
- Concentrate on what they can do rather than what they can not do
- Allow those you are coaching to share information on their condition without judgement
- Reassure and keep things positively focussed
- Use the STEP approach in setting up your coaching activity
- Look at examples of good practice such as [Golf in Society](#)
- Use the dementia friendly sport and leisure guide to see how other sports have approached this and what might work for you and your coaching



## Additional things you can adjust

- Have seats or benches available for people to sit down between shots or activities
- Keep things simple so that they're easy to remember
- Use video technology where possible so that participants can take away things to practice
- If sending any communications about lessons or playing times, copy in friends or family so that they know when things are planned
- Use the dementia friendly sport and leisure guides

If you have any specific questions or concerns then please:

- Download the [Dementia Friendly Sport and Leisure Guide](#) published by the Alzheimer's Society
- Contact England Golf via [clubsupport@englandgolf.org](mailto:clubsupport@englandgolf.org)
- Contact your [local Alzheimer's Society support](#)