



Website Feature Articles

DADS Training Nursing Home Staff in Dementia Care



Millions of Americans have Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. According to the Alzheimer's Association, the number of Americans with these conditions will grow each year as the size and proportion of the U.S. population age 65 and older continue to increase.

While some people with dementia are cared for at home, others may live in one of Texas' 1,200 nursing homes. To help facilities provide quality care for this growing population, the Texas Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS) is offering **free dementia care training for all nursing home employees**.

And after completing the training, employees may be eligible to become a Certified Dementia Practitioner (CDP). In addition, each attendee will receive a certificate of successful completion awarding 8 continuing education units for licensed nurses, social workers and nursing home administrators, and 8.0 contact hours for other disciplines.

What is Taught during the Training?

"People with Alzheimer's and dementia have behaviors that can be challenging," said Michelle Dionne-Vahalik, DADS Quality Monitoring Program director. "Through this training we hope to give front-line staff more knowledge to care for these residents without using drug interventions."

The 8-hour training covers a number of topics, including:

- Diagnosis, prognosis and treatment
- Communication and feelings
- Aggressive behaviors
- Intimacy and sexuality
- Staff and family support
- Diversity and cultural competence
- Spiritual care and end of life
- Activities of daily living

Dionne-Vahalik said DADS already has trained hundreds of nursing home employees across the state and the requests keep rolling in. "Over the next two years, we have committed to provide this training across the state. We have 32 trainers who will provide the training at nursing homes and as part of joint training events."

How Do Employees Become Certified?

The path to becoming a CDP is through the National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners and International Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners. According to their website, certification is open to all health care professionals, front line staff and clergy who work in health care settings.

Once nursing home staff have completed the DADS training, they can visit <http://www.nccdp.org/cdp.htm> [<http://www.nccdp.org/cdp.htm>] to complete the application process.

How Does My Facility Request a Training?

Staff can be trained in a couple of ways:

- Request that DADS bring the training to their facility
- Participate during DADS joint training events

For more information, or to request an Alzheimer's Disease & Dementia Care Seminar in your facility, send an email to TQM@dads.state.tx.us [<mailto:TQM@dads.state.tx.us>].

Alzheimer's facts

- One in 9 people age 65 and older (11 percent) has Alzheimer's disease.
- About one-third of people age 85 and older (32 percent) have Alzheimer's disease.
- Of those with Alzheimer's disease, the vast majority (82 percent) are age 75 or older.

Source: 2014 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures

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