

**ALZHEIMER'S
AUSTRALIA VIC
DEMENTIA
SERVICES
GUIDE**

Advice and support for people living with dementia, their families, friends and carers.

**UNDERSTAND ALZHEIMER'S
SUPPORT AUSTRALIA**
FIGHTDEMENTIA.ORG.AU



For more than 30 years, Alzheimer's Australia Vic has been committed to supporting people with dementia, their families and carers. As the peak not-for-profit organisation representing the needs of people living with dementia, we lead the way in dementia education and support services.

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home and community care
A JOINT COMMONWEALTH AND STATE/TERRITORY PROGRAM
PROVIDING FUNDING AND ASSISTANCE FOR AUSTRALIANS IN NEED



The Alzheimer's Australia Vic Dementia Services Guide

provides helpful information for anyone who is concerned about their memory or has a diagnosis of dementia, and their families and carers. All Victorians need to know that we are here for them when a diagnosis is received, or whenever they have concerns or questions. It is important that they know they are not alone – in Victoria we estimate that more than 80,000 people are currently living with dementia.

■ What services are available through Alzheimer's Australia Vic?

If you have dementia-related concerns regarding your own health or the health of someone close to you, asking for help is an incredibly important step. It can be reassuring to know that a wide range of information and services is available to help people impacted by dementia continue to live well.

- We have 12 offices throughout regional Victoria and the metropolitan area.
- There are a range of services available to support people living with all types of dementia.
- Our team of dementia specialists provide information, support, education and counselling at every stage of the disease from pre-diagnosis, throughout the condition and during bereavement.
- Our inclusive services have been specifically designed to meet the needs of the whole community, regardless of age, cultural background or health condition.
- Services cater to individuals, couples, families and groups.
- We can also arrange access to the many external service providers throughout Victoria.



- The vast majority of our services are free.
- Services can be accessed in a variety of ways – face-to-face, by telephone or online, depending on the needs and particular situation of each individual.
- Our online services currently in development include e-counselling, a lifestyle website for people with dementia and a children's website.

■ How do I take the first step to accessing a service?

There are a number of ways that people make initial contact with Alzheimer's Australia Vic. For many calling our National Dementia Helpline on **1800 100 500** is the quickest way to speak with us. You can also email us anytime on **alz@alzheimers.org.au**

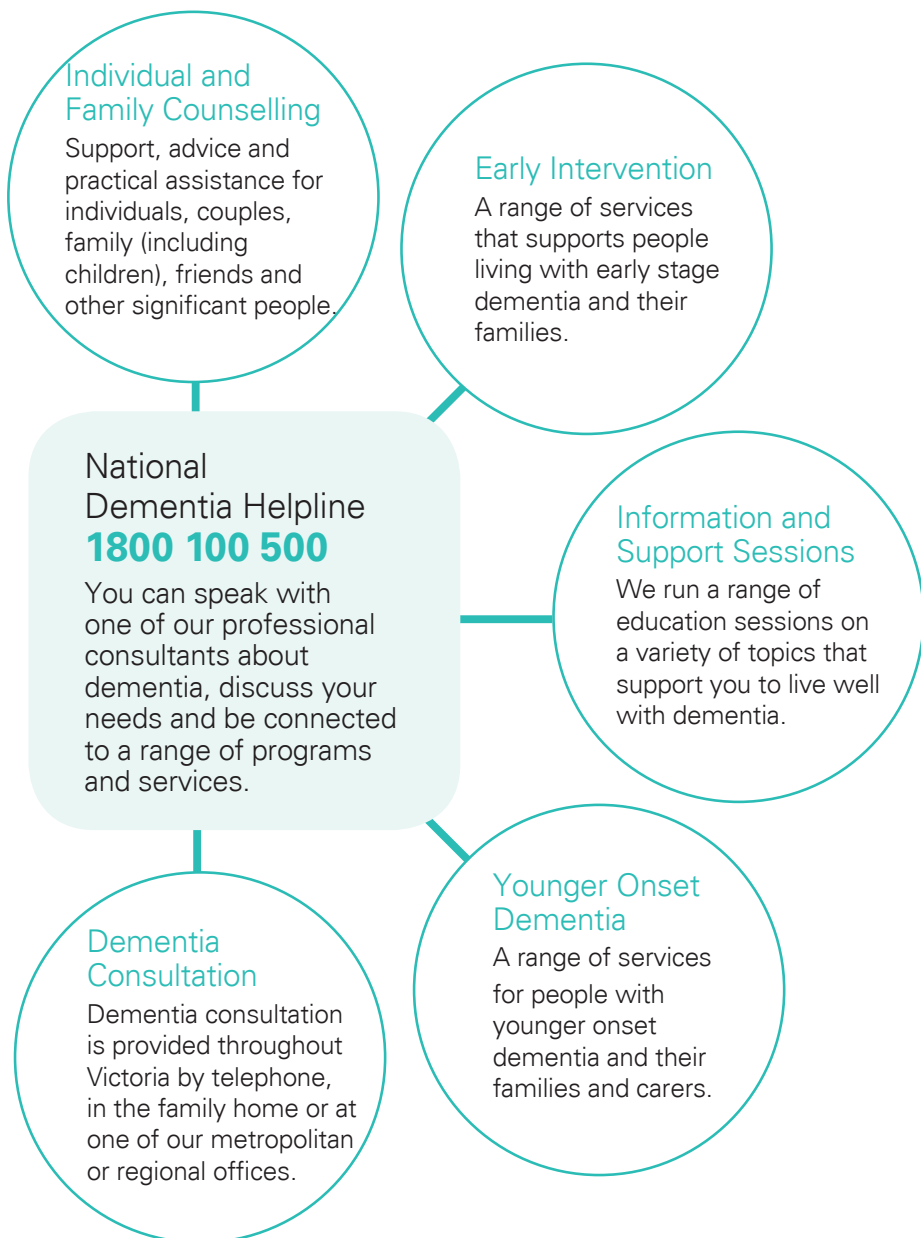
Once contact has been made, we will identify the service required and make arrangements to connect the individual or group with that service.

If you already know who you need to speak to or have been referred to us by health professionals, call us directly on **03 9815 7800**.



For language assistance call
Translating and Interpreting
Services on **131 450**

■ What happens when I call Alzheimer's Australia Vic?



The National Dementia Helpline is an Australian Government initiative.



■ How do I access general information about dementia?

We find that many people are simply seeking information. They want to know what dementia is, how it progresses and what they can do about it.

General dementia information is available through a wide variety of help sheets available from our website: **www.fightdementia.org.au**

Additionally, these help sheets can be requested by phoning, emailing or writing to us, or by dropping in to see us at any of our offices.

Help sheet categories include:

- About dementia
- Caring for someone with dementia
- Looking after families and carers
- Residential care and dementia
- Changed behaviours and dementia
- Young people and dementia

These help sheets are also available in 32 community languages.

A large range of in-depth dementia related information, such as books, journals and DVDs are available through the specialist library at our Hawthorn Family Services office. Items loaned from the library can be posted, upon request.

General information can also be accessed by calling the National Dementia Helpline on **1800 100 500**.

Interpreter and hearing services can be provided.

■ Can I talk to somebody about my concerns relating to dementia?

People generally want to know what services are available, how to access those services and what can be done to improve their personal situation. It is important for people to have somebody to talk to throughout their experience with dementia. Our team of trained and experienced dementia specialists provide personalised information and advice.

Often people wish to discuss emotional reactions, changed relationships, planning for the future, sourcing appropriate services, living arrangements, dealing with changes in behaviour, family or cultural reactions.

Sessions with dementia specialists can be provided face-to-face at one of our offices or in a family home. Alternatively, they can take place over the telephone or by using Internet services such as Skype.



■ Who is the counselling for?

Counselling for individuals

We have a number of professional counsellors who are available to support you to work through your questions and concerns and address the emotional impacts of living with dementia. Often it is the family and carers that benefit from attending counselling sessions. However, people in the early stages of dementia or people with concerns about their memory can also benefit.

Counselling for families

The word 'family' means different things to different people. At Alzheimer's Australia Vic, we consider a family quite simply as any group of individuals who refer to themselves as a family.

Families often provide the main source of support for people living with dementia. Counselling can therefore be provided to the whole family, sections of the family or individuals within the family.

Our specialist Family Counsellors work with any combination of family members and may also work with the professional or social networks of families to assist positive changes.

Family counselling is concerned with the interactions between family members and building support within the family unit.

Counselling for couples

Couples impacted by dementia are a specific type of family group, many of whom receive counselling together. The issues associated with changed relationships are often areas that people wish to discuss. Our counsellors can support couples to work through these issues.

■ Are there ways that a person with dementia can meet people in similar situations?

Many people in the early stages of dementia are keen to meet and interact with other people in similar circumstances, discussing feelings and experiences.

‘Living with Dementia’ groups

Our ‘Living with Dementia’ groups are designed to meet this need whilst, at the same time, offering education and support. People in the early stages of dementia can attend alone if they wish, but usually attend with a support person (their partner, another relative or a friend).

During a series of counsellor-led interactive group sessions, all presentations and discussions are relevant to people in the early stages of dementia.

Topics include:

- symptoms and diagnosis
- research and drug treatments
- driving
- planning for the future
- living well with dementia
- community services
- legal issues





Memory Lane Cafés

Our Memory Lane Cafés offer an opportunity for people living with dementia to have a social outing in a supportive and familiar environment. It is ideal to attend these events with a partner or family member, however people with dementia living alone can attend by themselves.

Each event consists of a two-hour session held in a community café setting, where guests are treated to morning or afternoon tea, entertainment and the opportunity to interact with other people in similar circumstances. Our staff members are also available to support and discuss all aspects of dementia and our services.

Memory Lane Cafés are held eight times per year at various locations throughout Victoria. There are also more specialised cafés catering to different cultural groups or people living with younger onset dementia.

Feedback from guests is that the cafés have become an important part of their lives and they feel more connected to their community as a result. There is a small fee for attending which can be waived if you are experiencing financial hardship.



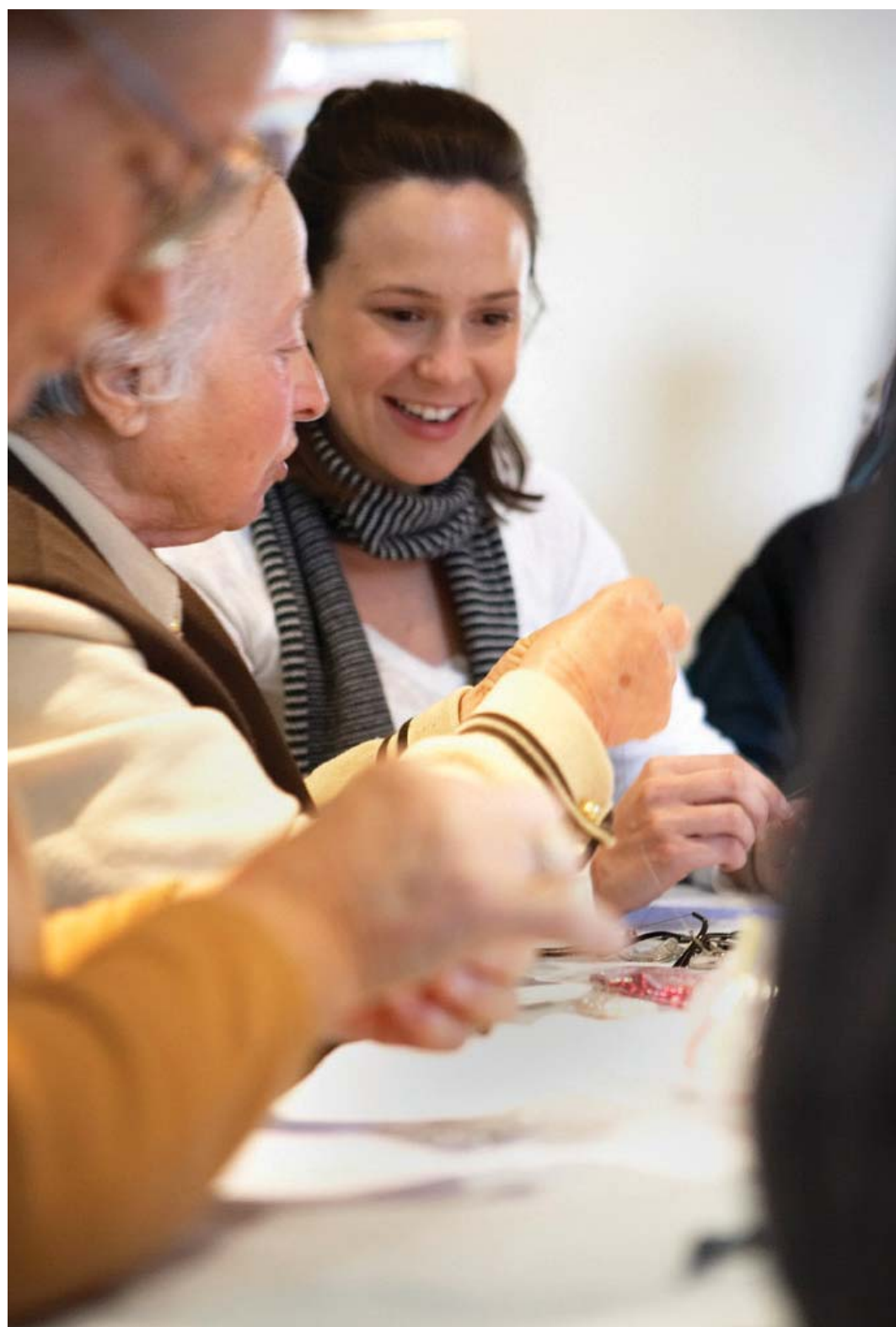
■ Are there services supporting younger people living with dementia?

People living with younger onset dementia, their families and carers have particular needs arising from their age, stage of life and the type of dementia. 'Younger onset dementia' generally means the person with the diagnosis is under 65 years of age. They will most probably have different interests to older people living with the disease. They may also still be in full-time employment, often at the peak of their career, have a mortgage or dependent children or parents.

Recognising these differing needs, we run the Younger Onset Dementia Key Worker Program. Participants have one point of contact who assists those involved with information, support, education and counselling towards achieving their unique goals. This 'Key Worker' provides individualised support and facilitates connections to other relevant services in the community.

The Younger Onset Dementia Key Worker Program also provides:

- Living With Younger Onset Dementia – a group program offering education and support
- Younger Onset Dementia Cafés – a way for younger people to come together socially and meet others in a similar situation
- Younger Onset Dementia Online Forum – a national forum which provides a place for people to share stories, seek advice and connect with others in a similar situation – **www.talkdementia.org.au**
- Family counselling
- Linking to services
- Support to access the National Disability Insurance Scheme



■ Are there group information and support sessions available for families and people with dementia?

There will come a time when a person living with dementia will eventually need hands-on care and increased support from loved ones.

Families and carers tend to cope better when they have a good understanding of dementia, have been educated on ways to manage the issues associated with the disease and have developed ways to manage their own reactions and emotions.

Our **Family Information and Support Sessions** provide participants with an in-depth understanding of the issues associated with caring for a person living with dementia, whilst at the same time providing an environment where people in similar situations can share stories, concerns and reactions.

The range of programs covers diverse topics addressing the different aspects of caring. Some are short, one-off sessions whilst others run over several weeks. All programs are offered in different locations across Victoria.

Some examples of the topics covered are:

- Introduction to dementia
- Coping with changes in behaviour
- Effective communication
- The caring role
- Coping with carer stress
- Considering residential care
- Depression and dementia



■ I have concerns about my memory, but have not been diagnosed with dementia. Is there support available for me?

People with concerns about their memory or thinking are encouraged to call so we can assist with ensuring they are properly assessed.

‘Cognitive impairment’ is the term used when we experience difficulties with our thinking. Memory, concentration, planning and problem solving can all be affected. Whilst some people who experience difficulties with their memory may eventually develop dementia, others never will.

Mild cognitive impairment information sessions

These sessions are suitable for people diagnosed with mild cognitive impairment (MCI) and their families. The program looks at the difference between normal aging, MCI and dementia and discusses ways to manage the impacts of the condition.

LaTCH program

All people who experience cognitive problems can benefit from programs designed to improve their memories and education on the best ways in which to manage their day-to-day lives.

LaTCH is a program that runs for six weeks, facilitated by trained group leaders. People with MCI and a support person (if available) attend together.



■ What can I do if Alzheimer's Australia Vic doesn't offer the specific support I need?

Alzheimer's Australia Vic partners with many external service providers within the community. For many of these service providers, we offer secondary consultation and advice. Whatever your needs, we will act as a gateway and through our referral process will connect you to the appropriate provider.



■ How do I get in touch?

To learn more or become involved in any of our services and programs, please contact us.

Alzheimer's Australia Vic

Family Services

98-104 Riversdale Road,
Hawthorn 3122

Tel: (03) 9815 7800

Fax: (03) 9815 7801

Email: alz@alzheimers.org.au

National Dementia Helpline

1800 100 500



For an interpreter call
131 450

www.fightdementia.org.au/vic



@AlzheimersVic



Alzheimer's Australia Vic



AlzheimersVic

To contact any of our regional services, please call the National Dementia Helpline on 1800 100 500 for assistance.

Regional offices		
Hume region	550 Poole St, Albury NSW 2460	393-399 Wyndham St, Shepparton Vic 3630
Grampians region	4 East Street South, Ballarat 3350	
Loddon Mallee region	Level 1, 10-16 Forest St, (PO Box 639) Bendigo 3552	220-228 Thirteenth St, Mildura 3500
Gippsland region	2B / 35-37 Princes Way (PO Box 417) Drouin 3818	347a The Esplanade, (PO Box 909) Lakes Entrance 3909
	14 Warley Avenue, Cowes 3922	
Barwon South West region	1/318 Pakington St, Newtown 3220 (PO Box 7373, Geelong West 3218)	Suite 6, 715 Raglan Pde, Warrnambool 3280

**IF YOU'RE ASKING
YOURSELF
ANY OF THESE
QUESTIONS...**

What is dementia?

What can I do to
support my partner?

I'm feeling lost and
overwhelmed – can
anyone help me?

How do I talk to my
family and friends
about dementia?

Is anyone else feeling like me?

Am I doing the right thing?

How do we get a diagnosis?

Are there services that can help?

PLEASE CALL



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