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Dementia Friendly Bitterroot



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Hi Jana,
DFB is busy blooming, and you're helping to make that happen. Thanks for coming to our events and telling your neighbors. You're making it easier to talk about the "d" word, and that will make our valley a friendlier place for everyone.

Spring cleaning is kind to your mind

Is spring cleaning dementia friendly? You bet! An uncluttered house takes less energy to navigate. It takes less thought to choose clothes out of a closet that isn't full of things you no longer wear. In the kitchen, you'll use less energy preparing food from organized cupboards and fridge. **Room by room, paring down the "stuff" can really lighten the cognitive load. That's true for all of us, and especially for people who need to spend their mental energy wisely.** Check out these [helpful tips](#). If you need a recommendation for local decluttering help, [get in touch](#).



Make future wishes clear with a dementia directive

April 16 is [National Healthcare Decisions Day](#), with a spotlight on the importance of advance care planning. Did you know that, in addition to your usual healthcare directive, you can **put a dementia directive in place**? It allows you to specify care preferences depending on common thresholds in the progression. [Compassion & Choices' Dementia Values & Priority Tool](#) is clear and easy-to-use. They also have a wealth of other [dementia education and resources](#).

Get started

**Dementia Values and
Priorities Tool[®]**

Looking for a few willing peers

Dementia doesn't happen all at once. It starts with a small sign, and there may be years or even decades of adjusting to changing abilities. That brain fog might clear up, or the changes may increase—in memory, planning, decision making, vision, taste, mobility, or something else. That can be a lonely road. **Folks living with mild cognitive impairment or a dementia diagnosis who are still largely independent can learn from each other. DFB would like to start a social support group so these people can connect with each other.** Peer support can be a powerful part of keeping life as full as it can be.

[Get in touch if this peer group interests you](#)



A question we hear a lot

A good friend lives in another state, and their spouse/parent/sibling has dementia. What do I say to my friend? How can I help from this distance?

As simple as it sounds, just **listening without changing the subject or going into “fix it” mode** may be exactly the support your friend needs. Don't assume that your friend's kids or other family listen with this openness. Call your friend, rather than wait for them to call you. Listen and acknowledge what's on their mind, whatever that is (it's probably a whole mess of things). And be aware that these conversations might bring up feelings about your own life—fear, frustration, grief, appreciation, love... After the call, do something that comforts and renews you.

And if your friend hasn't plugged into dementia resources in their area, suggest that they find their local area agency on aging [online](#) or call **1-800-677-1116**. That's the first step to finding a wealth of practical services.



Have an idea for us? [We welcome your comments.](#)

Check out our [events.](#)



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