

Welcome

Welcome to the Living Well with Dementia Self-Help Workbook.

Receiving a diagnosis of dementia—or noticing changes in your memory or thinking—can bring many emotions. You may feel worried, frustrated, confused, or uncertain about the future. These feelings are completely understandable.

Although dementia changes the way the brain works over time, many people continue to enjoy meaningful lives by using practical strategies, staying connected with others, and focusing on what they can do rather than what they cannot.

This workbook has been designed to help you develop simple everyday habits that may make life easier and help you maintain your independence for as long as possible.

Remember, you are far more than your diagnosis.

Important Information

Please read before using this workbook.

This workbook is an educational self-help resource created by Safe Haven Connect CIC.

It aims to provide practical ideas and exercises that may help you:

Stay organised.

Build helpful daily routines.

Support your wellbeing.

Improve confidence in everyday activities.

Communicate your needs.

Maintain independence where possible.

This workbook does not treat, cure, prevent or slow the progression of dementia.

It is not a substitute for assessment, diagnosis, treatment, care planning or advice from a doctor, memory clinic, or other qualified healthcare professional.

If you notice new or worsening memory problems, confusion, personality changes, difficulty carrying out everyday tasks, or concerns about your health, seek advice from your GP or healthcare professional.

Who Is This Workbook For?

This workbook has been designed mainly for:

- ✓ People living with mild or early-stage dementia.
- ✓ People who have been diagnosed and wish to develop practical coping strategies.
- ✓ Family members and carers who would like to work through some sections together.

Some activities may be easier with support from someone you trust.

What You Will Learn

Throughout this workbook you will explore:

- Understanding dementia
- Memory support strategies
- Creating helpful routines
- Looking after your wellbeing
- Managing everyday tasks
- Communicating with confidence
- Home safety
- Staying socially connected
- Planning ahead
- Building a support network
- Worksheets and planners

- Practical self-help techniques

A Thought to Remember

> "Dementia may change parts of your life, but it does not define who you are. Every day still holds opportunities for comfort, connection and moments of joy."

Next section: Chapter 1 – Understanding Dementia: What It Is and What It Isn't.

Chapter 1 – Understanding Dementia: What It Is and What It Isn't

What Is Dementia?

Dementia is not a single disease. It is the name used to describe a group of symptoms caused by diseases that affect the brain.

These symptoms can include changes in:

Memory

Thinking

Problem-solving

Language

Understanding

Judgement

Behaviour

For many people, these changes develop gradually over time.

Everyone experiences dementia differently. No two people will have exactly the same symptoms or progress at the same rate.

Dementia Is Not a Normal Part of Ageing

As we get older, it's common to occasionally:

Forget where we left our keys.

Walk into a room and forget why.

Take longer to remember a name.

These occasional memory lapses are a normal part of ageing.

Dementia is different because the changes become more frequent and begin to affect everyday life.

For example, someone might:

Forget important appointments repeatedly.

Get lost in familiar places.

Find everyday tasks increasingly difficult.

Repeat the same questions many times.

Struggle to follow conversations.

Experience changes in mood or personality.

If you or someone you know is experiencing these symptoms, it's important to seek advice from a GP or healthcare professional.

Common Types of Dementia

There are several different types of dementia. Some of the most common include:

Alzheimer's Disease

The most common type of dementia.

It often affects:

Short-term memory

Learning new information

Planning

Decision making

Vascular Dementia

Usually caused by reduced blood flow to parts of the brain.

People may notice difficulties with:

Concentration

Planning

Organisation

Thinking speed

Dementia with Lewy Bodies

May cause:

Changes in attention

Visual hallucinations

Movement problems similar to Parkinson's disease

Sleep disturbances

Frontotemporal Dementia (FTD)

Often affects:

Personality

Behaviour

Language

Symptoms may appear at a younger age than some other forms of dementia.

What Causes Dementia?

Different diseases damage brain cells over time.

When brain cells become damaged or die, it becomes harder for different parts of the brain to communicate with each other.

This affects thinking, memory, communication and daily functioning.

Researchers continue to study dementia to better understand why it develops and how to improve treatments and care.

Can Dementia Be Cured?

At the present time:

 There is no cure for most types of dementia.

Some treatments and support may help manage symptoms for some people, but they do not stop or reverse the disease.

Many people continue to live meaningful lives by combining medical care with practical support, healthy routines and strategies that help them stay as independent as possible.

Living Well Is Still Possible

A diagnosis of dementia does not mean life is over.

Many people continue to:

♥ Spend time with family and friends.

♥ Enjoy hobbies.

♥ Go on holidays.

♥ Volunteer.

♥ Learn new skills.

♥ Take part in community activities.

Life may change, but meaningful experiences, relationships and enjoyment are still possible.

Reflection Exercise

Take a few moments to think about the following questions.

Write your answers if you wish.

What worries me most about dementia?

What am I still able to enjoy doing?

Who supports me when I need help?

Key Message

> A dementia diagnosis changes some aspects of life, but it does not take away your value, your identity, or your ability to experience connection, purpose and moments of happiness.

Next Chapter: Recognising Changes and Understanding Symptoms.

Chapter 2 – Recognising Changes and Understanding Symptoms

Every person living with dementia is unique.

Some people notice only small changes for several years, while others experience changes more quickly. Symptoms can also vary depending on the type of dementia a person has.

Remember:

> Experiencing dementia does not change your worth as a person.

Understanding the changes you may experience can help you prepare, reduce anxiety and seek the right support when you need it.

Common Memory Changes

Many people notice changes with short-term memory first.

You may find yourself:

- Forgetting recent conversations.
- Misplacing everyday items.
- Repeating questions without realising.
- Forgetting appointments.
- Finding it harder to learn new information.

Many people still remember events from many years ago much more clearly than things that happened yesterday.

This is common.

Changes in Thinking

Some people notice changes with:

- Concentration.
- Solving problems.
- Making decisions.
- Planning activities.
- Following instructions.

Tasks that once felt simple may begin to take longer.

Allowing yourself extra time is perfectly okay.

Changes in Communication

You may sometimes:

- Forget certain words.
- Lose your train of thought.
- Find conversations tiring.
- Need people to repeat themselves.

This can feel frustrating.

Taking your time and asking others to speak clearly can often help.

Changes in Mood

Living with dementia can affect emotions.

You may sometimes feel:

♥ Frustrated

♥ Worried

♥ Sad

♥ Embarrassed

♥ Confused

♥ Angry

♥ Lonely

These feelings are understandable.

Talking to someone you trust can often help.

Changes in Daily Activities

Some everyday tasks may gradually become more difficult, such as:

- Cooking.
- Shopping.
- Managing money.
- Using technology.
- Following recipes.
- Driving.
- Remembering medication.

Asking for support with these tasks is not a sign of failure.

It is a practical way of keeping yourself safe and independent.

Good Days and Difficult Days

Many people living with dementia notice that some days are easier than others.

You may feel:

- ✓ Clear and confident one day.
- ✓ More forgetful the next.

This is completely normal.

Try not to judge yourself on difficult days.

Instead ask:

"What do I need today?"

Looking After Your Emotional Wellbeing

Receiving a diagnosis can bring many different emotions.

Be kind to yourself.

Allow yourself time to adjust.

It is okay to ask for help.

You do not have to cope with everything alone.

Self-Help Tips

Although these ideas cannot stop dementia progressing, they may help support day-to-day living:

- ✓ Keep a regular routine.
- ✓ Write important information down.

- ✓ Use reminders on your phone or calendar.
- ✓ Label cupboards and drawers if helpful.
- ✓ Keep important items in the same place.
- ✓ Break larger tasks into smaller steps.
- ✓ Rest when you feel tired.
- ✓ Accept help when you need it.

Activity – My Changes

Write down any changes you have noticed.

Memory

Thinking

Communication

Daily activities

Reflection

Which of these changes causes you the most frustration?

What small step could make that part of your day a little easier?

Key Message

> Recognising changes is not about focusing on what has become difficult. It is about understanding your needs, finding practical ways to adapt, and continuing to live as independently and meaningfully as possible.

Next Chapter: Building Helpful Daily Routines.

Chapter 3 – Building Helpful Daily Routines

Why Are Routines Helpful?

Living with dementia can sometimes make everyday life feel less predictable.

A simple daily routine can help reduce confusion, lower stress, and make important tasks easier to remember.

A routine doesn't need to be strict. The aim is to create a day that feels familiar, comfortable, and manageable.

Benefits of Having a Routine

Many people find that a routine can help them:

Feel more confident.

Reduce anxiety.

Remember important tasks.

Stay independent for longer.

Improve sleep.

Feel more in control.

Reduce the number of decisions they need to make each day.

Even small routines can make a big difference.

Start Small

You do not need to change everything at once.

Begin with one or two routines that are easy to follow.

For example:

Morning:

Wake up at a similar time.

Wash and get dressed.

Eat breakfast.

Take medication if prescribed.

Check your diary or calendar.

Afternoon:

Lunch.

Short walk or gentle exercise.

Hobby or favourite activity.

Rest if needed.

Evening:

Evening meal.

Relax with music, television or reading.

Prepare clothes for tomorrow.

Go to bed at a similar time.

Keep Things in the Same Place

Keeping everyday items in the same location can make life easier.

For example:

- ✓ Keys
- ✓ Wallet or purse
- ✓ Glasses
- ✓ Mobile phone
- ✓ Medication
- ✓ TV remote
- ✓ Important paperwork

A small basket or tray near the front door can be useful for frequently used items.

Use Helpful Reminders

Many people find reminders useful.

Examples include:

Wall calendars.

Diaries.

Whiteboards.

Sticky notes.

Phone reminders.

Alarm clocks.

Medication organisers.

Family reminder calls.

These are tools to support you—they are not signs of failure.

Break Tasks Into Smaller Steps

Large jobs can sometimes feel overwhelming.

Instead of thinking:

"I need to clean the whole house."

Try:

✓ Make the bed.

✓ Wash the dishes.

✓ Vacuum one room.

✓ Rest.

✓ Continue later if you feel able.

Taking one step at a time is perfectly okay.

Plan Around Your Best Time of Day

Many people notice they have more energy or clearer thinking at certain times.

Ask yourself:

When do I feel most alert?

When do I feel tired?

When do I find tasks easier?

If possible, plan more demanding activities during your best time of day.

It's Okay to Rest

Rest is an important part of looking after yourself.

If you feel tired:

Sit quietly for a while.

Listen to calming music.

Enjoy a warm drink.

Practise slow breathing.

Read or look through photographs.

Resting is part of taking care of yourself.

Worksheet – My Daily Routine

Morning

Afternoon

Evening

Reflection

Think about one small change that could make tomorrow a little easier.

It might be:

Putting your keys in the same place.

Setting a reminder on your phone.

Preparing tomorrow's clothes.

Writing appointments in a diary.

Small steps can become helpful habits over time.

Key Message

> A routine cannot stop dementia, but it can support your independence, reduce unnecessary stress, and help make each day feel more familiar and manageable.

Coming Next

Chapter 4 – Memory Support Strategies: Practical Ways to Remember Everyday Things

Chapter 4 – Memory Support Strategies

Practical Ways to Remember Everyday Things

Memory changes are one of the most common symptoms experienced by people living with dementia.

Although no self-help strategy can stop dementia from progressing, there are many practical ways to make everyday life easier and reduce frustration.

The aim is not to have a perfect memory, but to find strategies that help you stay organised and independent.

Be Kind to Yourself

Everyone forgets things from time to time.

Living with dementia can make these moments happen more often, and it's understandable if that feels upsetting.

Try not to criticise yourself.

Instead, remind yourself:

> "I'm doing the best I can, and it's okay to use tools that help me."

Using reminders, calendars or notes is a practical strategy—not a sign of failure.

Use One Calendar

Keeping appointments in different places can become confusing.

Choose one main calendar, such as:

A wall calendar

A diary

A mobile phone calendar

A digital tablet

Keeping everything together makes it easier to check your plans.

Write Things Down Straight Away

If you remember something important:

Write it down immediately.

Examples include:

✓ Appointments

✓ Shopping items

✓ Birthdays

✓ Questions for your GP

✓ Telephone messages

Waiting until later may make it easier to forget.

Keep Important Items Together

Having a "home" for important belongings can save time and reduce worry.

Consider keeping these together:

Keys

Glasses

Wallet or purse

Mobile phone

Medication

Hearing aids

Important letters

Using a tray or basket near your front door can help.

Label Your Home

Simple labels can make everyday tasks easier.

Examples include:

Kitchen cupboard

Tea

Coffee

Plates

Glasses

Bathroom

Towels

Toiletries

Bedroom

Clothes

Socks

Labels are simply tools that support independence.

Use Technology If It Helps

Technology can be a useful memory aid.

Examples include:



Phone reminders



Alarm clocks



Digital calendars



Voice reminders



GPS location tools (where appropriate)

Choose the tools that feel comfortable for you.

Create Checklists

Many people find daily checklists reassuring.

Example Morning Checklist:

☐ Get dressed

☐ Brush teeth

☐ Eat breakfast

☐ Take medication

☐ Check today's calendar

☐ Take keys

☐ Take mobile phone

Crossing off completed tasks can help reduce worry about forgetting something.

Memory Through Routine

Repeating the same routine each day often makes remembering easier.

For example:

Medication after breakfast.

Walking after lunch.

Calling family every Sunday.

Small habits often become easier over time.

When You Can't Remember Something

Everyone has moments when a memory won't come.

If this happens:

✓ Pause.

✓ Take a slow breath.

✓ Give yourself time.

✓ Look for clues.

✓ Check your diary or notes.

✓ Ask someone you trust if needed.

Avoid putting pressure on yourself.

Sometimes the memory returns later.

Activity – My Memory Helpers

Tick the ideas you would like to try.

- ☐ Wall calendar
- ☐ Diary
- ☐ Phone reminders
- ☐ Whiteboard
- ☐ Sticky notes
- ☐ Labels around the home
- ☐ Daily checklist
- ☐ Medication organiser
- ☐ Family reminders
- ☐ Other:

My Important Items

Where will I keep these?

Keys

Glasses

Phone

Medication

Wallet or Purse

Other

Reflection

Think about one memory strategy you could start using this week.

How might it make everyday life a little easier?

Key Message

> Memory aids do not replace your abilities—they support them. Using practical tools can help reduce stress, build confidence, and make everyday life more manageable while maintaining independence wherever possible.

Coming Next

Chapter 5 – Looking After Your Physical and Emotional Wellbeing

Chapter 5 – Looking After Your Physical and Emotional Wellbeing

Your Wellbeing Still Matters

Living with dementia can affect many areas of life, but looking after your overall wellbeing remains important.

While healthy habits cannot cure or stop dementia, they may help you feel more comfortable, support your general health, and improve your quality of life.

Focus on small, realistic changes rather than trying to do everything at once.

Looking After Your Physical Health

Keeping your body as healthy as possible supports your overall wellbeing.

Some simple ideas include:

- ✓ Eating regular, balanced meals.
- ✓ Drinking enough fluids throughout the day.
- ✓ Keeping physically active if you are able.
- ✓ Attending medical appointments.
- ✓ Taking prescribed medication as directed.
- ✓ Looking after your eyesight and hearing.

If you have questions about your health, always speak to your GP or another healthcare professional.

Gentle Physical Activity

Being active can benefit both your body and your wellbeing.

Choose activities that feel safe and enjoyable.

Examples include:

Walking.

Gentle stretching.

Gardening.

Chair-based exercises.

Dancing.

Light household activities.

Always exercise within your own abilities. If you have concerns about what is suitable for you, seek advice from your healthcare professional.

Eating Well

A balanced diet helps support your general health.

Try to include:



Fruit and vegetables.



Wholegrains.



Protein such as beans, eggs, fish or lean meat.



Dairy or suitable alternatives.



Plenty of fluids.

If preparing meals becomes difficult, don't be afraid to ask for support.

Staying Hydrated

Not drinking enough can sometimes make people feel:

Tired.

Dizzy.

Confused.

Headachy.

Try to drink regularly throughout the day unless you've been advised otherwise by your healthcare professional.

Water, milk and sugar-free drinks are good choices for many people.

Looking After Your Emotional Wellbeing

Receiving a dementia diagnosis can bring many emotions.

You may experience:

Worry.

Sadness.

Anger.

Fear.

Frustration.

Loneliness.

These feelings are understandable.

Talking to someone you trust can help.

Stay Connected

Spending time with other people can support emotional wellbeing.

You might:

Meet a friend for a coffee.

Attend a local community group.

Speak with family on the phone.

Enjoy hobbies with others.

Join activities you enjoy.

Even short conversations can brighten your day.

Make Time for Enjoyment

Your diagnosis does not mean you have to stop doing the things you enjoy.

Continue activities that are meaningful to you where possible.

Examples include:

 Listening to music.

 Reading.

 Arts and crafts.

 Gardening.

 Simple puzzles.

 Watching favourite films.

 Looking through family photographs.

Enjoyment is an important part of wellbeing.

Managing Stress

Everyone experiences stress sometimes.

Simple ways to help yourself relax include:

- ✓ Taking slow, gentle breaths.
- ✓ Sitting in a quiet place.
- ✓ Listening to calming music.
- ✓ Spending time outdoors.
- ✓ Speaking to someone you trust.
- ✓ Taking regular breaks.

If stress feels overwhelming or persistent, speak to your GP or another healthcare professional.

Activity – My Wellbeing Plan

Tick the ideas you would like to include in your week.

- ☐ Go for a walk.
- ☐ Drink more water.
- ☐ Speak with a friend or family member.
- ☐ Spend time on a hobby.
- ☐ Listen to music.
- ☐ Rest when needed.
- ☐ Eat regular meals.
- ☐ Attend appointments.
- ☐ Ask for help if I need it.
- ☐ Other:

Reflection

What is one thing that usually helps you feel calmer or happier?

What is one small wellbeing goal you would like to work towards this week?

Key Message

> Looking after your wellbeing will not stop dementia from progressing, but it can help you feel more comfortable, supported, and able to enjoy everyday life. Every small positive step matters.

Coming Next

Chapter 6 – Communicating with Confidence and Asking for Help

Chapter 6 – Communicating with Confidence and Asking for Help

Communication Can Change

Many people living with dementia notice changes in the way they communicate.

You may sometimes:

Forget certain words.

Lose your train of thought.

Find it harder to follow conversations.

Need more time to answer questions.

Repeat yourself without realising.

These changes can feel frustrating, but they do not mean you have nothing valuable to say.

Your thoughts, feelings and experiences still matter.

Give Yourself Time

There is no need to rush.

If you lose a word:

- ✓ Pause.
- ✓ Take a breath.
- ✓ Try another word.
- ✓ Describe what you mean if the exact word doesn't come.

Most people are happy to give you extra time.

Let Others Know What Helps

Sometimes people don't know how to support you.

It's okay to tell them.

For example, you could say:

"Could you speak a little more slowly?"

"Can you repeat that, please?"

"I need a little more time to think."

"Can you write that down for me?"

Most people appreciate knowing how they can help.

Reduce Distractions

Conversations are often easier when there is less background noise.

If possible:

Turn the television down.

Move somewhere quieter.

Speak to one person at a time.

Make eye contact if you feel comfortable.

These simple changes can make conversations easier to follow.

Stay Connected

It can be tempting to avoid social situations if communication becomes more difficult.

However, staying connected with other people is important for emotional wellbeing.

You don't need to have long conversations.

Sometimes simply spending time with others is enough.

Asking for Help Is a Strength

Many people worry that asking for help means they are losing their independence.

In reality, asking for help can help you stay independent for longer.

Support might include:

Help with shopping.

Transport to appointments.

Collecting prescriptions.

Household tasks.

Technology support.

Company on difficult days.

Accepting support allows you to focus your energy on the things that matter most.

Who Could Help Me?

Think about the people in your life.

Write down anyone you could ask for support.

Family

Friends

Neighbours

Healthcare Professionals

Community Groups

Other

My Support Network

Sometimes it helps to know who to contact.

Name: _____

Relationship: _____

Telephone: _____

Name: _____

Relationship: _____

Telephone: _____

Name: _____

Relationship: _____

Telephone: _____

Activity – Asking for Help

Think about one task that has become difficult.

What is it?

Who could help?

How could they help?

How would accepting that support make life a little easier?

Reflection

Remember:

Everyone needs support at different times in life.

Accepting help does not mean you have failed.

It means you are taking positive steps to look after yourself.

Key Message

> You deserve to be listened to, respected and supported. Asking for help is not giving up your independence—it is one way of protecting it.

Coming Next

Chapter 7 – Home Safety and Living Independently

Chapter 7 – Home Safety and Living Independently

Staying Safe at Home

Home is often where we feel most comfortable and independent.

As dementia progresses, some everyday tasks may become more challenging. Making a few practical changes can help reduce risks while supporting your confidence and independence.

The aim is not to take away your independence, but to make your home easier and safer to live in.

Small Changes Can Make a Big Difference

Simple adjustments may help make everyday life more manageable.

Examples include:

- ✓ Keeping walkways free from clutter.
- ✓ Making sure rooms are well lit.
- ✓ Keeping frequently used items within easy reach.
- ✓ Labelling cupboards and drawers if helpful.
- ✓ Using non-slip mats where appropriate.
- ✓ Keeping emergency contact numbers in an easy-to-find place.

Preventing Falls

Falls can happen to anyone, but reducing hazards around the home may lower the risk.

Consider:

Wearing well-fitting, supportive footwear.

Cleaning up spills promptly.

Securing loose rugs or removing them if they are a trip hazard.

Using handrails on stairs where available.

Taking your time when standing up or walking.

If you experience dizziness or repeated falls, contact your GP or healthcare professional.

Kitchen Safety

Many people continue to enjoy cooking for years after a dementia diagnosis.

If cooking becomes more difficult, these ideas may help:

- ✓ Use a timer when cooking.
- ✓ Keep worktops tidy.
- ✓ Turn pan handles inwards.
- ✓ Avoid distractions while using the cooker.
- ✓ Switch appliances off after use.
- ✓ Consider asking someone to help with more complicated meals if needed.

If you ever feel unsure about using kitchen equipment safely, speak with a trusted family member or healthcare professional about ways to reduce risks.

Medication Safety

Taking medication correctly is important.

Helpful strategies include:

Using a weekly pill organiser.

Setting phone or alarm reminders.

Keeping medication in one safe place.

Following instructions from your healthcare professional.

Never change or stop prescribed medication without medical advice.

If you are unsure whether you have taken a dose, seek advice from a pharmacist or healthcare professional rather than taking an extra dose.

Fire Safety

Simple habits can improve safety.

Remember to:

- ✓ Test smoke alarms regularly.
- ✓ Turn electrical appliances off when not in use.
- ✓ Avoid overloading plug sockets.
- ✓ Never leave cooking unattended if it is unsafe to do so.

If you have concerns about fire safety, your local fire and rescue service may be able to offer advice or a home safety visit.

Emergency Information

Keep important information somewhere easy to find.

This could include:

Your full name.

Emergency contact numbers.

GP surgery details.

Current medications.

Allergies.

Important medical information.

Having this available may be helpful in an emergency.

Independence Is About Finding the Right Balance

Asking for support with certain tasks does not mean losing your independence.

Many people remain independent for longer by accepting help when it is needed.

The goal is to continue doing as much as you safely can while accepting support for tasks that become more difficult.

Home Safety Checklist

Tick the items you have already completed.

- ☐ Walkways are free from clutter.
- ☐ Important items are kept in the same place.
- ☐ Smoke alarms are working.
- ☐ Emergency contacts are easy to find.
- ☐ Medication is organised safely.
- ☐ Rooms are well lit.
- ☐ Floors are free from trip hazards.
- ☐ I know who to contact if I need help.

Reflection

Is there one small change you could make today that would help you feel safer or more organised at home?

Who could help you make that change if needed?

Key Message

> Living independently doesn't mean doing everything alone. It means finding practical ways to stay safe, maintain your confidence, and continue living life in a way that works for you.

Coming Next

Chapter 8 – Planning Ahead: Making Decisions for the Future

Chapter 8 – Planning Ahead: Making Decisions for the Future

Planning Ahead Can Bring Peace of Mind

Thinking about the future can sometimes feel difficult.

You may worry that planning ahead means expecting the worst.

In reality, planning ahead is about making your own choices while you are able to do so. It can help you feel more prepared and may make things easier for the people who care about you.

Planning ahead does not mean giving up hope. It means making sure your wishes are known and respected.

Why Planning Ahead Is Helpful

Planning ahead may help you:

Feel more in control.

Reduce uncertainty.

Make your own decisions.

Help family understand your wishes.

Reduce stress for those supporting you.

Many people find that once they have made a plan, they feel more reassured.

Things You Might Want to Think About

Everyone's situation is different.

Some areas you may wish to consider include:

Important contact details.

Medical information.

Financial arrangements.

Daily support.

Home adaptations if needed.

Transport.

Future care preferences.

You do not have to decide everything at once.

Take your time.

Talking About Your Wishes

Having conversations with people you trust can be helpful.

You may wish to speak with:

Family members.

Friends.

Your GP.

A healthcare professional.

A solicitor if you need legal advice.

Talking openly can help ensure others understand what is important to you.

Organising Important Information

Keeping important documents together can make life easier.

Examples include:

- ✓ Birth certificate.
- ✓ Passport.
- ✓ NHS number.
- ✓ GP contact details.
- ✓ Medication list.
- ✓ Insurance information.
- ✓ Utility account details.
- ✓ Emergency contact numbers.

Store them somewhere safe and let someone you trust know where they are.

Financial Planning

Some people choose to organise their finances while they are able to make decisions.

If you need advice about financial planning or legal matters, speak with an appropriately qualified professional.

This workbook cannot provide financial or legal advice.

Looking Ahead with Confidence

Planning ahead does not mean expecting everything to change quickly.

Many people continue living independently for a long time after a diagnosis of dementia.

The aim is simply to make life easier if your needs change in the future.

My Future Planning Checklist

Tick the areas you have already thought about.

- ☐ My emergency contacts are up to date.
- ☐ My important documents are organised.
- ☐ Someone I trust knows where important information is kept.
- ☐ I have discussed my wishes with someone I trust.
- ☐ I know who to contact if I need advice.
- ☐ I know where to find information about local support.

My Important Contacts

Name: _____

Relationship: _____

Telephone: _____

Name: _____

Relationship: _____

Telephone: _____

Name: _____

Relationship: _____

Telephone: _____

Reflection

What is one thing you could organise this month that might make life easier in the future?

Who could support you if you need help?

Remember

Planning ahead is your choice.

Some people like to organise everything early, while others prefer to take one step at a time.

There is no right or wrong way.

Choose the approach that feels right for you.

Key Message

> Planning ahead is about protecting your choices, maintaining your independence, and helping ensure that your wishes are understood. Taking small steps today can provide reassurance for tomorrow.

Coming Next

Chapter 9 – Building a Support Network and Staying Connected

Chapter 9 – Building a Support Network and Staying Connected

You Do Not Have to Face Dementia Alone

Living with dementia can sometimes feel isolating, but support is available.

Staying connected with other people can help improve your wellbeing, reduce loneliness, and provide practical support when you need it.

Everyone's support network is different. It may include family, friends, neighbours, healthcare professionals, carers, community groups, or volunteers.

Remember:

> Asking for support is a positive step towards maintaining your wellbeing and independence.

What Is a Support Network?

A support network is the group of people you can turn to when you need:

Someone to talk to.

Practical help.

Emotional support.

Advice.

Company.

Reassurance.

You don't need a large number of people. Even one or two trusted individuals can make a real difference.

Different Types of Support

Support can come in many forms.

Emotional Support

People who listen without judgement.

Examples:

Family.

Friends.

Support groups.

Faith communities (if important to you).

Practical Support

Help with everyday tasks.

Examples include:

Shopping.

Transport.

Collecting prescriptions.

Household chores.

Attending appointments.

Accepting help with these tasks may help you continue doing other things independently.

Professional Support

Healthcare professionals may include:

Your GP.

Memory clinic staff.

Dementia specialist nurses.

Occupational therapists.

Social workers.

Pharmacists.

If you are unsure who to contact, your GP can often help direct you to the right service.

Staying Socially Connected

Many people find it helpful to stay involved in activities they enjoy.

This might include:

Meeting a friend for coffee.

Attending a local community group.

Walking with others.

Arts and crafts.

Gardening.

Music groups.

Gentle exercise classes.

Volunteering where appropriate.

Keeping socially active may support your emotional wellbeing and help you stay connected with your community.

It's Okay to Have Difficult Days

Some days you may feel less confident about going out or meeting other people.

That's okay.

Try not to judge yourself.

If today feels difficult, tomorrow may feel different.

Taking one small step is often enough.

Looking After Relationships

Dementia can affect relationships, but open communication can help.

You may wish to tell people:

What helps you.

What you find difficult.

How they can support you.

Many people want to help—they simply don't always know how.

My Support Network

Write down the people you can contact.

Family

Friends

Neighbours

Healthcare Professionals

Community Groups

My Weekly Connection Plan

This week I would like to:

- ☐ Telephone someone.
- ☐ Meet a friend.
- ☐ Attend a community group.
- ☐ Spend time with family.
- ☐ Go for a walk with someone.
- ☐ Enjoy a hobby with others.
- ☐ Ask for help if I need it.

Other:

Reflection

Who makes you feel supported?

How could you stay connected with them this week?

Is there someone you haven't spoken to for a while that you would like to contact?

Key Message

> A strong support network doesn't take away your independence—it helps you protect it. Staying connected with others can support your wellbeing, reduce feelings of isolation, and remind you that you do not have to face dementia alone.

Coming Next

Chapter 10 – Living Positively: Finding Purpose, Hope and Enjoyment Every Day

Chapter 10 – Living Positively: Finding Purpose, Hope and Enjoyment Every Day

Living Well Is Still Possible

A diagnosis of dementia does not take away your ability to experience happiness, purpose, or meaningful moments.

Life may change, and some activities may become more challenging, but there are still many ways to enjoy each day.

This chapter is about focusing on what you can do, rather than what you can no longer do.

Remember:

> Every small moment of enjoyment matters.

What Gives Your Life Meaning?

Purpose looks different for everyone.

For some people it might be:

Spending time with family.

Looking after a pet.

Gardening.

Listening to music.

Helping others.

Going for a walk.

Reading.

Creating artwork.

Attending community groups.

Enjoying a favourite television programme.

There is no right or wrong answer.

Celebrate Small Achievements

Not every achievement has to be big.

Celebrate things like:

- ✓ Getting dressed.
- ✓ Preparing breakfast.
- ✓ Going for a short walk.
- ✓ Speaking to a friend.
- ✓ Completing a crossword.
- ✓ Watering the plants.
- ✓ Attending an appointment.

Every achievement deserves recognition.

Continue Doing the Things You Enjoy

You may need to adapt some activities, but many hobbies can still be enjoyed.

Ideas include:

- 🎵 Listening to favourite music.
- 📖 Reading books or magazines.
- 🎨 Painting or drawing.

 Gardening.

 Simple jigsaw puzzles.

 Looking through family photographs.

 Watching wildlife.

 Baking with support if needed.

 Watching favourite films.

Enjoyment is an important part of wellbeing.

Focus on Today's Successes

Thinking too far ahead can sometimes feel overwhelming.

Instead, ask yourself:

What has gone well today?

What made me smile?

What am I grateful for today?

What would I like to do tomorrow?

Living one day at a time can help many people feel less anxious.

Be Kind to Yourself

Some days will feel easier than others.

On more difficult days:

Rest if you need to.

Accept support.

Take things one step at a time.

Remember that difficult days do not last forever.

Treat yourself with the same kindness you would show someone else.

Looking After Your Confidence

Dementia may sometimes affect confidence.

Remember:

Your diagnosis does not define you.

You are still:

♥ A valued person.

♥ Someone with life experience.

♥ Someone who deserves respect.

♥ Someone who can continue learning and enjoying life.

Activity – Things That Bring Me Joy

Write down activities that make you feel happy or relaxed.

My Positive Moments This Week

This week I enjoyed:

This week I am proud that I:

Daily Gratitude

Write down three things you are grateful for today.

1.

2.

3.

Reflection

Think about one thing you are looking forward to.

It could be something small.

Perhaps a visit from family, enjoying your favourite meal, spending time outside, or watching a favourite programme.

Write it below.

Key Message

> Living with dementia does not mean giving up on joy, purpose, or hope. By focusing on your strengths, celebrating small achievements, staying connected, and doing the things that matter to you, it is possible to continue living a meaningful and fulfilling life.

Coming Next

Chapter 11 – Final Reflections, Personal Action Plan and Moving Forward Together

Chapter 11 – Final Reflections, Personal Action Plan and Moving Forward

Looking Back

You have now reached the end of this workbook.

Taking the time to work through these pages shows commitment, courage, and a willingness to support your own wellbeing.

Living with dementia can bring changes and challenges, but it does not take away your value, your experiences, or the important role you play in the lives of others.

Although there may be difficult days, there can also be days filled with laughter, connection, achievement, and meaningful moments.

Remember that you do not have to face this journey alone.

What Have I Learned?

Take a few moments to reflect on what has been most helpful.

The most useful thing I learned was:

The strategy I want to keep using is:

My Personal Action Plan

Choose a few realistic goals to work towards over the coming weeks.

My Wellbeing Goal

My Daily Routine Goal

My Memory Strategy

My Physical Activity Goal

My Social Goal

One Thing I Will Ask for Help With

My Support Team

Write down the people you know you can contact if you need support.

Name	How They Can Help	Contact
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Remember These Important Messages

 It is okay to ask for help.

- ♥ Every person experiences dementia differently.
- ♥ Small changes can make everyday life easier.
- ♥ Looking after your wellbeing is important.
- ♥ Staying connected with others can reduce feelings of loneliness.
- ♥ You are more than your diagnosis.
- ♥ Every day is a new opportunity to experience moments of comfort, purpose and joy.

My Promise to Myself

Complete the sentence below.

From today, I will...

A Final Reflection

There may be days when life feels difficult.

On those days, remember:

You are still the same person with your own personality, memories, relationships, and life story.

It is okay to take things one step at a time.

Progress is not measured by perfection.

Sometimes simply getting through the day is enough.

Be patient with yourself.

Celebrate the small victories.

Accept support when you need it.

Most importantly, remember that your life continues to have meaning and value.

Congratulations

Well done on completing the Living Well with Dementia Self-Help Workbook.

Whether you completed every page or simply explored the sections most relevant to you, you have taken positive steps towards supporting your wellbeing and independence.

Keep returning to the exercises whenever you find them helpful.

There is no right or wrong pace.

This workbook is here whenever you need it.

Self-Help Statement

This workbook has been created by Safe Haven Connect CIC as an educational self-help resource.

It is intended to provide practical ideas that may support day-to-day living, wellbeing, organisation, communication, and independence for people living with dementia, particularly in the earlier stages.

This workbook does not diagnose, treat, cure, prevent, or slow the progression of dementia.

It should not be used as a substitute for medical advice, diagnosis, treatment, or ongoing care from a GP, memory clinic, or other qualified healthcare professional.

If you experience new symptoms, worsening memory problems, changes in behaviour, concerns about your safety, or have questions about your health, seek advice from a healthcare professional promptly.

If you are supporting someone living with dementia and have concerns about their wellbeing or safety, seek appropriate professional advice.

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Living Well with Dementia – Self-Help Workbook

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About Safe Haven Connect CIC

Safe Haven Connect CIC is a community organisation committed to improving wellbeing through free educational self-help resources, practical tools, and supportive community initiatives.

Our resources are designed to empower people with knowledge and practical strategies while encouraging anyone with concerns about their health to seek appropriate professional support.

You are not alone. Support is available, and every small step towards looking after yourself matters. 

Disclaimer

This workbook has been created by Safe Haven Connect CIC as an educational self-help resource.

It is intended to provide practical information and self-help strategies to support people living with dementia, particularly in the early stages, as well as their families and carers where appropriate.

This workbook does not diagnose, treat, cure, prevent, or slow the progression of dementia or any other medical condition.

The information, exercises and worksheets are designed to support day-to-day wellbeing, organisation, communication and independence where possible. They are not a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, treatment, assessment or care.

If you are concerned about your memory, thinking, behaviour, or any symptoms you are experiencing, you should seek advice from your GP or another qualified healthcare professional. If you have been diagnosed with dementia, continue to attend appointments and follow the advice of your healthcare team.

Do not stop, start or change any medication or treatment based on the information in this workbook without first consulting an appropriate healthcare professional.

If you are supporting someone living with dementia and have concerns about their safety, wellbeing or ability to manage daily activities, seek advice from an appropriate healthcare professional or local support service.

While every effort has been made to ensure the information in this workbook is accurate at the time of publication, medical knowledge and guidance may change over time. Safe Haven Connect CIC accepts no liability for any loss, damage or injury arising from the use of, or reliance on, the information contained within this workbook.

If you or someone else is experiencing a medical emergency, or there are immediate concerns about safety, contact the emergency services or your local emergency healthcare provider immediately.

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