

What we heard from the community: Reporting back

Summer 2022

Background

We are developing a multi-year strategic plan that will begin April 1, 2023. It is our priority to hear directly from people with lived experience of dementia to inform this work.

In the spring of 2022, we canvassed a wide range of people who are affected by and care about dementia. This includes our community members (clients and volunteers); organizations connected to issues related to dementia; and members of the general public not closely connected to our organization. We did surveys, held focus groups and had one-on-one conversations.

We heard about the experiences, needs and priorities of British Columbians affected by dementia, as well as their experience with the Alzheimer Society of B.C.

This is a report on what we heard and how this will help define our direction and goals over the next few years.

Needs and priorities



Individual-level challenges:

- Mental health
- Physical health
- Managing symptoms
- Financial issues
- Navigating the health-care system
- Caregiver skills

System-level challenges:

- The increasing prevalence of dementia
- Access to support, affected by:
 - Staffing shortages
 - The need for culturally-appropriate care
 - Lack of options
 - Difficulty in system navigation
 - Barriers to receiving a diagnosis
- Stigma and lack of knowledge
- Need to engage people living with dementia and their caregivers meaningfully
- Barriers in the built environment
- Lack of available, affordable, appropriate housing
- Financial challenges and income inequities
- Inaccessibility of transit options
- COVID-19: Social isolation, long-term care visitation restrictions, gaps exposed in the health-care and community support systems

“It is impossible to live at home, but so is getting somewhere else to live. The care homes are full.”

Organizational strengths and areas of opportunity

Organizational strengths

- Eighty-seven per cent of our clients reported **being satisfied** with the programs and services they received from the Alzheimer Society of B.C.
- Roughly 70 to 80 per cent of people living with dementia and caregivers agreed that their connections with us made them **feel less alone** and **more knowledgeable about dementia**.
- Eighty-five per cent of our volunteers reported **feeling appreciated** for volunteering their time.

“You are there for us and others. You listen and try to hook people with services that would help them. You check back to make sure things are going better.”

Areas of opportunity

- Create spaces for people affected by dementia to connect.
- Reduce barriers to accessing services – both virtually and in-person.
- Offer learning opportunities both in real-time and on-demand.
- Enhance cultural appropriateness of information.
- Expand supports to help navigate health and social services.
- Increase general public’s awareness about programs and services – as well as dementia more broadly.
- Continue to prioritize working with people living with dementia and their caregivers to ensure programs and services remain responsive to their needs.

“Have a local gathering place where people living with dementia and caregivers can meet and socialize.”

What comes next?

We are using this community input, as well as input from our staff and Board, to draft our strategic plan which will be shared later this fall. Based on the input we have received, the plan will focus on the following four key areas:

