

BE DEMENTIA FRIENDLY

Type Fonts

The ability to read small fonts declines as people age and as forms of visual impairment, such as macular degeneration, become more common. San Serif fonts -- for example, Arial (used here) or Helvetica -- in at least 12-point size can help make text easier to read.

Headings

Breaking up written material with headings can improve readability and draw readers' eyes to the most important points. Headings printed in a different color than the body text help to more clearly mark these divisions.

Contrast

Use high contrast between text and the background, with black on white being the easiest to read. Avoid

(Continued on page 2.)



Communication Guidelines

Check Your Messaging and Formatting Choices

This communications guide is intended to help those who create information for and about older adults avoid using stereotypes. It also provides tips to enhance readability.

Dementia Friendly Tulsa strives to enhance the city's inclusion and meaningful engagement of those with cognitive decline, as well as their caregivers. It is important to use language that focuses on the abilities, not deficits, of people with dementia. Doing so helps them stay engaged and maintain their feelings of self-worth.

We hope this flyer helps improve messaging with all aging adults, especially those who are affected by dementia.

Thank you for your support in our efforts to build bridges between those living with dementia and the Tulsa community.



DEMENTIA FRIENDLY TULSA

(*Contrast from page 1.*)

using yellow text or backgrounds because aging eyes may have a harder time seeing this color due to the yellowing of the eyes' intraocular lens.

Spacing

Sufficient spacing of written content, both between individual lines of text and between blocks of text, makes the material easier to read for someone with visual impairment. For example, the spacing used in this document is easier to read than this:

These lines of text are too close together and make this sentence harder to read.

Translation

A 2019 report by the Center for Immigration Studies notes that 67.3 million U.S. residents speak a language other than English at home.

It is important to know your audience. Whenever possible, provide translations of materials so you can better reach all impacted demographics.



Words are Powerful

Avoiding Stigmatizing and Ageist Language

Messages about older adults and those with dementia influence the public's perception about aging and cognitive decline. They also can impact self esteem. When writing and speaking, be sure to use language that is accurate and also is non-stigmatizing.

Non-stigmatizing Language

A dementia diagnosis should not define someone's life, and it also does not reflect a person's level of understanding. Dementia is not a normal part of aging, and it affects every person differently. Dementia can affect memory, language, planning, problem solving, behavior, and mood and sensory perception. And, the disease's progression can take from four-to-20 years.

If it's relevant to what's being written or said, use "living with dementia" to describe a person's situation. Avoid using terms such as: sufferer, victim, demented, afflicted, and senile.

When discussing the impact of dementia, use: challenging, life changing, stressful, disabling. Steer clear of words like: hopeless, tragic and devastating.

Ageist Language

Aging is a highly individual experience, and improved healthcare has increased productive life expectancy. Avoid using language -- such as "silver tsunami" -- that implies people living longer is a disaster. Remember that "elderly" suggests frail and incapacitated and does not apply to most people over age 65. Those living in senior housing are residents, not necessarily "patients." (And "older adults" is a better description than "seniors.")

Bottom line: take care to not generalize about the skills, interests, or abilities of people based on age.