



National group to offer new certification and training to volunteers serving seniors with dementia

 Alyssa Hui

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For many caregivers, looking after someone with some sort of dementia can be daunting. But whether you're a full-time caregiver or a volunteer, preparing and training for this role is key to providing the best quality service to those who need it.

The National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners (NCCDP) will now offer training and distinct certification for volunteers who provide services to seniors diagnosed with dementia. The new certification is called Certified Dementia Volunteer (CDV).

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Sandra Stimson, CEO of NCCDP and a certified Alzheimer's and dementia care trainer, told Seasons that staff and volunteers who work with seniors often have little to no training on Alzheimer's or dementia care, but training can allow volunteers and staff to feel confident on the delivery of proper approaches and care techniques.

“For example, a senior with dementia diagnosis may not remember that their spouse is deceased. Typically, a person with no training might state that their spouse is deceased, but reality orientation would not be the appropriate response,” Stimson explained. “Volunteers are the backbone for many organizations, and they need to have the same comprehensive dementia education that is offered to other staff.”

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According to Stimson, dementia education standards and regulations are different across each state and industry. For example, what's required of an activity assistant working in adult day care is different from the requirement of a nursing assistant working in a home care agency.

Currently, no dementia education standards exist for volunteers, and certification is not mandatory in most states—although many employers are now starting to require it.

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What do the program and training include?

The NCCDP and the Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia Care (ADDC) will offer live

programs and courses that focus on aging, intimacy, cultural diversity, elopement, spirituality, depression, delirium, medications, pain, nutritional considerations and much more. Videos that focus on staff concerns, in-home care and long-term care are also presented during the program. Volunteers who care for seniors with dementia will additionally receive a student handout notebook.

Stimson said those interested in signing up will be required to complete the ADDC eight-hour live seminar in order to submit an application for the certified dementia volunteer certification.

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“Up until now, there has not been a national push to ensure that all staff and volunteers receive training and certification, regardless of the amount of time provided by volunteer or staff,” she said. “But all staff and volunteers should receive comprehensive ADDC education to be more prepared to provide services.”

How do I apply and how much does it cost?

Staff and volunteers must complete the ADDC live eight-hour seminar by a Certified Alzheimer’s Disease Dementia Care Trainer (CADDCT) who’s licensed by NCCDP to use the ADDC curriculums.

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The fee for the program and eight-hour seminar is \$195 per person; however, Stimson said many organizations have in-house certified CADDCT trainers who can present the curriculum at no charge to their staff.

Group rates are also available for companies that plan to offer classes for their staff and volunteers. The corporate group rate is \$35, and the individual rate is \$145 per person.

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Once the program is completed, you must apply online for the CDV certification, which is an additional cost—\$70 for individuals and \$35 per person for the corporate group rate.

Stimson said certification renewal is every two years, and volunteers or employees will need 10 hours of continuing education.

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To get the certificate, you must also meet the following qualifications:

- Actively serving as a volunteer at a care facility, hospital, rehab center, hospice care, home care agency, etc. that provides dementia care services
- Completed a minimum of one year (at least 55 hours per year) of volunteer service, and currently an active member volunteer with clients diagnosed with dementia
- High school graduate
- At least 18 years old
- Completed the NCCDP curriculum by an NCCDP trainer in good standing
- Letter from facility or director verifying the status of participation, in good standing, and service hours

More information on the certified dementia volunteer seminar or certification can be found on the [National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners website](#).



Alyssa Hui

Alyssa Hui is a freelance journalist and a former TV reporter and radio host. With more than four years of experience, she covers topics ranging from health, wellness, education and community. She graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison but was born and raised in the heart of Chicago's Chinatown. Besides being a writer, creator and strong communicator, Alyssa enjoys spending her free time lifting weights, baking and journaling. Read more about her at...

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