



## **DSC Dementia Policy**

***(Approved by Board 23 February 2023)***

### **Introduction**

How do you tell a person if you think they might have dementia? It's not an easy conversation and it's natural that the person may be defensive, angry or even in denial that anything is wrong. The most important thing is to try and see the situation from their point of view and also make sure that you don't appear to be critical or accusing them of anything. Here at the Donald Simpson Centre, it is likely that our convenors will be the first to notice or be advised by activity members that someone may not be quite coping with an activity. This policy is aimed at assisting convenors and activity members to cope with these situations.

Dementia is just another one of those health aspects which develop as we mature and, as with all of these conditions, should be treated with respect. An overriding reason for this is that it may not be dementia but some other temporary or ongoing setback for a member. The following guidelines are aimed at assisting in coping with dementia at the Centre for all of our members.

1. All convenors should have training in recognizing dementia and the elements of this policy.
2. If a concern arises in an activity group, the convenor should first advise the CEO or Office Manager to discuss the situation and, if considered necessary, discuss how to approach the situation for the benefit of the member and the other members of the activity.
3. Options for a first step include a talk with the member concerned by either the convenor, CEO or Office Manager or a combination of these. A first approach to a member should be made apart from the group in a comfortable setting. Another person from the group who is a friend of the member may agree to accompany them. This should just be a friendly enquiry asking the member if they are happy in the group and whether they feel they are coping with the activity and whether they need any support. It may be possible that this will end the matter if it appears that

dementia is not an issue and that there is some other remedy with which we can help.

4. If the situation remains unresolved, contact should be attempted with the member's next of kin. This should be approached in a friendly manner to advise that the member may be experiencing some difficulty in the group and asking if the next of kin has any information which may help.
5. Some agreement should be sought either for the next of kin to further observe the member or for them to seek appropriate advice and maintain contact with the Centre in the interests of the member.
6. If, in the unlikely event of a refusal to cooperate by the next of kin and/or the member, a decision should be made on whether the member is coping well enough to remain in the group. This could result in a member and their next of kin being advised in writing that the Centre is unable to provide the necessary care needed for them to remain in the activity at this time; or it could be decided to maintain observation on the member to see if there is improvement or that the previous step be enforced.