**Dementia Learning Centre an ‘educational first’ for NZ**

A new national Dementia Learning Centre has been established to provide better support and information for people diagnosed with dementia and for those who care for them.

Launched by Alzheimers NZ, the Dementia Learning Centre is the first dementia education hub of its kind in the country.

It will target care partners and the family of people living with dementia, as well as health professionals.

It will offer a range of evidence-based dementia education courses, workshops and webinars to increase the knowledge and skills required to care and support people with dementia and their family.

Course content will include both accredited (NZQA) and non-accredited courses delivered face to face and on online, and is designed to:

* Lift knowledge and understanding about dementia
* Drive improvement in quality of care and support for people living with dementia
* Enhance continuous learning and development in the sector

“The Learning Centre’s aim is to boost capability, skills and leadership within the sector, key requirements outlined in the [Dementia Action Plan](https://www.alzheimers.org.nz/news/dementia-action-plan-a-first-for-nz.aspx), so that people with dementia are better supported,” says Alzheimers NZ chief executive Catherine Hall.

“There has been chronic under-investment by Government in this field for many years which has serious consequences for people living with dementia.”

There are approximately 70,000 New Zealanders living with dementia and that number is expected to nearly triple in coming years.

A diagnosis not only impacts the person with the condition, but also has major, long-term ramifications for family and friends, and especially for someone in the role of care partner.

Ms Hall said the formation of The Dementia Learning Centre will mean improved support for people affected by dementia.

“The educational content and sector leadership it will provide will be instrumental in helping many thousands of New Zealanders to live their best lives possible.”

The Centre will be managed by dementia educator and clinician Dr Kathy Peri.

Its programmes will be delivered online, through webinars and in workshops held around the country. For more information about the Learning Centre or to indicate interest in its programmes contact [education@alzheimers.org.nz](mailto:education@alzheimers.org.nz).

The first courses and education programmes will start in February next year.

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**About the Dementia Learning Centre:**

The Centre will expand to include a range of resources and future-focused initiatives, including:

* **Online programmes -** These online education programmes have been designed to improve knowledge and provide support. Two e-Learning programmes will be available in 2021. The first will focus on care partners and their family and whānau, the second will focus on living well with dementia.
* **Educational webinars -** These webinars will deliver the most up-to date dementia research and best practice. The first year will focus on professional development for Registered Nurses, with monthly sessions focusing on person centred care, which may be accredited to New Zealand Nursing Council professional development hours.
* **Cognitive Stimulation Training (CST) workshops -** CST is a non-pharmacological intervention to improve memory and quality of life for people with dementia. The facilitator training workshops will be delivered by Dr Kathy Peri and Dr Gary Cheung, who are International CST trainers for New Zealand.
* **An interactive virtual reality experience -** Alzheimers NZ will bring the [Educational Dementia Immersive Experience (EDIE)](https://www.dementia.org.au/information/resources/technology/edie) programme from Dementia Australia to NZ in 2021. This course involves a two-hour simulation workshop and will be suitable for anyone with an interest in dementia, from health professionals to community groups
* **Bespoke education programmes and dementia consultancy -** The centre also offers customised education and training programmes from dementia experts who have in-depth experiential and theoretical knowledge in dementia care.

The Dementia Learning Centre is supported by an Educational Quality Advisory Group.