

## **Dementia-Friendly Collective Session 3: Understanding Community Frontline Services and Support for Persons Living with Dementia**

**18 January 2026 | CARITAS Agape Village**

### **Session Overview**

The third session of the Dementia-Friendly Collective was held on 28 January 2026 and focused on how **frontline services in the community respond to real-life situations involving persons living with dementia**. Rather than discussing dementia-friendliness at a conceptual level, the session centred on practical experiences from frontline partners who regularly encounter situations involving persons living with dementia in public and community settings.

The session brought together partners from transport, law enforcement, grassroots networks, and community organisations. Through sharing of lived frontline experiences, participants gained insights into how human connection, clear operating processes, and cross-sector collaboration enable safer and more supportive community responses.

### **Purpose and Strategic Intent**

Frontline services are often the first point of contact for persons living with dementia who may feel lost, confused, or distressed. This session aimed to:

- surface practical lessons from frontline responders,
- highlight challenges encountered on the ground, and
- explore how partnerships, shared protocols, and community awareness strengthen response and support for persons living with dementia and their caregivers.

### **Key Perspectives Shared**

#### **1. Opening Activity: Creating Calm and Connection**

The session began with a tea dance and mindful breathing exercise led by **Ms Alison Lim**, Co-founder of **Dementia & Co**, together with members of the Dementia & Co community. This opening activity demonstrated how simple, everyday activities can foster calm, inclusion, and connection. It reinforced the idea that persons living with dementia can continue to participate meaningfully in community life when environments are supportive and inclusive.

#### **2. Public Transport as a Frontline Touchpoint**

**Mr Edmund Soon**, Manager (Service Quality), **SMRT Corporation**, shared how public transport staff frequently encounter individuals with additional needs, including persons living with dementia who may feel lost or confused while travelling.

He described how training, clear processes, and situational awareness enable staff to respond calmly and provide timely assistance, even during challenging situations such as peak hours or service disruptions. Mr Soon highlighted that continued public education and internal capability building are critical in supporting frontline staff.

He also shared that through partnership with **AIC**, all MRT stations and bus interchanges now serve as **Dementia Go-To Points (GTPs)**. These locations act as safe return points where trained staff can provide immediate assistance and link wandering persons to further support, strengthening the community safety net.

#### **3. Police Support and Community Safety**

**Ms Ho Li Fang**, Assistant Director (Operations Management Division), **Singapore Police Force**, shared how police officers respond to situations involving persons who show signs of mental disabilities, including cases involving missing persons living with dementia.

She highlighted the complexity of such cases, where officers may need to work with limited information while balancing safety, care considerations, and legal responsibilities. The sharing illustrated how a **Whole-of-Government approach**, supported by inter-agency coordination and technology, enables timely and appropriate interventions in the community.

#### **4. Role of Community and Grassroots Networks**

**Ms Valerie Quek, Grassroots Leader** from Henderson-Dawson, shared the importance of community partnerships in supporting persons living with dementia and their caregivers. She emphasised that effective support relies on strong communication pathways and shared understanding among grassroots leaders, volunteers, and service providers. When community stakeholders are aligned and work toward a common goal, assistance can be provided more quickly and smoothly. Her sharing highlighted how trust and relationships within the community make a tangible difference on the ground.

### **Panel Discussion: Strengthening Frontline Collaboration**

Facilitated by **Ms Jennifer Yong** from **Reach Community Services**, the panel discussion brought together representatives from different sectors to cross-share frontline experiences and explore areas of synergy in supporting persons living with dementia.

#### **Panel members included:**

- Ms Alison Lim (Co-founder, Dementia & Co)
- Mr Eddie (Member, Dementia & Co)
- Mr Edmund Soon (Manager, Service Quality, SMRT Corporation)
- Ms Valerie Quek (Grassroots Leader, Henderson-Dawson)

The discussion highlighted the importance of frontline partners working together across sectors and learning from good practices and established protocols. Panelists shared how coordinated responses and shared understanding strengthen support for persons living with dementia and their caregivers, particularly in moments of crisis or uncertainty.

### **Key Discussion Themes and Reflections**

Questions from participants pointed to:

- the need for clearer ways to identify available resources and support touchpoints in the community,
- opportunities to co-create dementia-friendly solutions within neighbourhoods, and
- importance of strengthening referral and escalation pathways across services.

Panel speakers collectively expressed the aspiration for dementia-friendly neighbourhoods to be inclusive spaces where the public has a better understanding of dementia and its varied forms. Looking ahead, participants reflected on the need to strengthen and diversify support pathways so that persons living with dementia can receive more targeted and sustained support, while continuing to foster environments that encourage collaboration and shared responsibility.

### **Key Takeaways for Sector Partners**

Key insights from the session included:

- Frontline responses are strengthened when staff are supported by training, clear processes, and cross-sector partnerships.
- Community-level collaboration enhances the ability to respond promptly and compassionately to real-life situations involving dementia.
- Dementia-friendly communities rely not only on infrastructure, but also on human connection, shared responsibility, and trust across sectors.

This session reinforced the value of grounding dementia-friendly efforts in frontline realities and highlighted the importance of continued collaboration among transport operators, law enforcement, community leaders, and service providers.

