

Dementia programme expanded to seven centres in Singapore

Chin Soo Fang
Senior Correspondent

A community programme for people living with mild to moderate dementia has been expanded to seven centres islandwide, with plans to support more than 1,200 participants by 2028.

The Cognitive Intervention Programme (CIP), rolled out by the Agency for Integrated Care (AIC), follows a successful two-year pilot launched in October 2022 involving more than 120 participants across two centres.

More than 85 per cent of those who completed the weekly two-month intervention maintained or improved their cognitive scores, while over 90 per cent reported better mood.

Since mid-2025, CIP has been offered at centres run by Dementia Singapore, Yong-en Care Centre and NTUC Health. Dementia Singapore was also involved in the pilot phase.

The programme offers structured, multimodal activities aimed at helping participants maintain or improve their cogni-

tive, physical and social abilities. Activities are tailored to each participant's abilities and interests, and include memory games, dance, baking, arts and crafts.

A trained staff member guides up to four participants during each session, keeping seniors mentally stimulated, socially connected and physically active.

Participants start with a seven-week core programme, with three-hour sessions twice a week.

They may then opt for a maintenance phase of up to 26 weeks to help sustain gains made during the initial stage.

Participants will be assessed on their abilities and referred to appropriate resources after completing the programme. They will also continue to be supported by their healthcare professionals.

Ms Winifred Lau, AIC's primary and community care development division chief, said that while dementia day care centres provide cognitive stimulation activities, they primarily focus on custodial care, and are more suited for people who require more support and supervision in personal care or daily living activities.

Custodial care refers to non-



Madam Maria Hadi, who was diagnosed with dementia in 2025, playing a cognitive game at NTUC Health's Day Centre for Seniors in Kampung Admiralty on Feb 26. With her is NTUC Health staff member Kamaria Md Yassin. ST PHOTO: JASEL POH

medical care, such as supporting seniors with their daily living needs like feeding, walking and medical supervision.

CIP, by contrast, is designed for those with mild to moderate dementia. Prospective participants undergo further assessment to determine their suitability for

group-based and physical activities.

Caregivers are also supported through regular check-ins, resources and guidance.

"Feedback from the two-year CIP pilot showed that caregivers experienced reduced stress and caregiving burden after their

loved ones attended CIP," Ms Lau said. "The majority of caregivers have also noted improvements in their loved ones' cognitive and functional status."

Each session starts from \$80, with subsidies of up to 80 per cent available for eligible Singapore citizens and permanent residents, based on their financial means.

The expansion of CIP comes as Singapore's ageing population drives a steep rise in dementia cases. The Well-being of the Singapore Elderly study by the Institute of Mental Health estimated that about 74,000 people aged 60 and above were living with dementia in 2023. The Ministry of Health estimates that this figure could rise to 152,000 by 2030.

"As Singapore becomes a super-aged society this year, more people will be touched by dementia – whether it is a family member, a friend or a neighbour," said AIC chief executive Tan Chee Wee. "Dementia goes beyond a clinical diagnosis. It shapes the daily experiences faced by persons living with dementia, while influencing their sense of belonging."

He cited a study conducted by the Singapore Management Uni-

versity in 2023, which found that 60 per cent of persons living with dementia feel they are regarded as less competent. More than half do not feel included in the community.

To deepen public understanding of dementia and showcase support resources, AIC is holding the Life Unstoppable! Living Beyond Dementia exhibition from Feb 28 to March 6 at Century Square from 10:30am to 8:30pm.

Madam Maria Hadi, 72, was diagnosed with dementia in 2025. She attends CIP at NTUC Health's Day Centre for Seniors in Kampung Admiralty.

Besides artwork and exercises, she participates in baking sessions, which help her reconnect with her love for cooking.

Her grandson and caregiver Yas Yani said her mood and memory have since improved.

"She is now excited and always looks forward to the activities and meeting her friends," said the 25-year-old freelance caregiver. "The cooking classes are her favourite, and she even learnt how to make Korean pancakes."

chinsf@sph.com.sg