



**Name of Organization:** The Building Capacity Project

**Name of Project:** Dementia Ventures (The BC side of the project)

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**What happened last year:** The Building Capacity Project is seeking to partner people living with dementia with community organizations positioned to offer engaging programs, in order to help those organizations make existing offerings more inclusive. A principle of the project is that every aspect of this work should be guided by the interests and expressed priorities of those living with dementia. Ultimately the BCP aims to help inform future policies and priorities in community and health settings, providing a roadmap for dementia inclusive communities.

Last year the UBC/Westside Vancouver team of the BCP, together with the Westside Seniors Hub, (collectively known as “Dementia Ventures”) supported community partners in developing innovative grass roots initiatives that support living well with dementia and contribute to stigma reduction. Some of these included the Dunbar Residents Association’s asset mapping initiative—a visual guide to dementia-friendly local spaces that encourages engagement and interaction with the physical environment (community benches, picnic tables, and boulevard gardens). Or Kitsilano Neighbourhood House’s planned “Diving Deep- Dementia Dialogues” series—several small-group discussions to gain insight on public perception and attitudes and gather feedback on applying learnings in the neighbourhood. Another example is Kits Neighbourhood House’s buddy program where trained volunteers pair up with individuals with dementia to act as constant and consistent companions, offer support, and contribute to a sense of emotional safety. Or South Granville Seniors Centre’s new Happy Memories Café, a monthly gathering for people interested in improving their memory, offering them and their significant others a chance to chat, bring up issues, offer support, and validate one another’s experience. Lastly, Westside Seniors Hub created a new website to showcase the different projects implemented and envisioned by partners, and to offer resources for other groups to plan similar initiatives.

The Building Capacity Project hosted a Dementia Ventures celebration in the fall of 2021, highlighting some of the incredible work being done in the province, and offering insight around how to scale up asset-based community development efforts like these to further shift the

paradigm towards a dementia friendly country. Dementia Ventures was featured on the national podcast Dementia Dialogues, talking about how best to centre the lived experience of people with dementia in this work, and continue efforts guided by their expressed interests.

**Challenges and opportunities:** One of the biggest challenges Vancouver has faced in terms of developing broader infrastructure and support for people with dementia is finding people with lived experience to be involved. Whether it's a matter of those individuals not knowing about the project or it's a sense that some individuals don't want to publicly identify as having dementia or memory loss issues, Dementia Ventures has worked tirelessly to bolster further efforts to spread the word. Part of that effort has been working to reduce stigma associated with dementia, making community engagement for individuals with lived experience potentially more inviting. There have been opportunities for DV to partner with another local research and outreach initiative called The Flipping Stigma Project, to communicate widely what it's like to feel judged and diminished because of one's condition. The other part of this work has involved developing a social media campaign to increase public awareness and shift the culture of fear towards inclusivity and understanding.

### **What's envisioned for next year?**

The BCP plans to continue investing in community partners developing dementia-inclusive programming. It plans to impact public policy further through its social media outreach, its podcast/webinar/ and public presentations presence, and through production and distribution of a wider range of knowledge products and training resources that will be made widely available in the coming months.