

DUTJ: DEMENTIA UNDERSTANDING THE JOURNEY



2023-2024 Annual Report



Message from our Board Chair

This has been another record year; there were 1680 learners that completed the Dementia: Understanding the Journey (DUTJ) Course. The levels of learner satisfaction were high (96%), and the projects submitted to demonstrate the integration of knowledge and skills were not only beautiful; they were impactful. Learners shared some of their profound learnings with us and facilitators shared their experiences as well (see comments dispersed throughout this document).

This record number of learners completing the course could not be done without the dedication of the facilitators working with post-secondary educators! The facilitators deliver this course with passion for dementia care and empowering learners on their journey to transfer the foundational knowledge to practice.

On behalf of the Board, in recognition of their tireless delivery of the DUTJ Course, I would like to thank each facilitator who has delivered the DUTJ course this year. You make all the difference.



Jody MacDonald
Board Chair

**THANK YOU
SO MUCH**
YOU ARE VERY MUCH APPRECIATED!

This year, although we continued the work to meet our strategic directions including closing the gap between education offerings and practice setting, enhancing curriculum design and advocating, a key focus of the Board was starting the 8th revision of the course. A key success of this program is maintaining the relevance and currency of the content and supporting transfer from learning to practice. With the support of our members, educators, and the Board, we can continue to improve care for those on the dementia journey through this foundational education. Over the next year, we are keen to see how this data transforms into a new program.

Having the course offered online, as well as in person, through a myriad of health education programs gives the program the ability to positively impact people on the dementia journey – promoting meaningful engagement and person-centred care.

Sincerely,

Jody MacDonald

Jody MacDonald, RN
DUTJ Board Chair



About Us

A key continued educational goal of the Board is to maintain a provincially recognized course to address the needs of persons living with dementia; based on the philosophy that persons with dementia have the same basic needs for security, shelter, nutrition, and affection as other adults, and have the same rights to have these basic needs met.

This education goal started in 1991, when an ambitious and dedicated group of individuals involved in long term care gathered in Pictou County. This group formed the Alzheimer Disease and Related Dementia Advisory Committee (ARDAC). In 2006, as the course grew, the committee made the decision to incorporate as a Society under the name Nova Scotia Alzheimer Disease and Other Dementia Care Course (ADODCC). In 2016, with the 7th Edition of the course, the Board updated its name to Dementia: Understanding the Journey Society.

Over the years, the Board has been comprised of a variety of dedicated individuals from diverse backgrounds, including physicians, nurses, recreation and occupational therapists, dieticians, educators, administrators, and family members. The members on the Board change over time, but the focus remains the same, to promote a person-centred approach to providing care and services for persons living with dementia through the ongoing development, promotion, and administration of Dementia: Understanding the Journey.

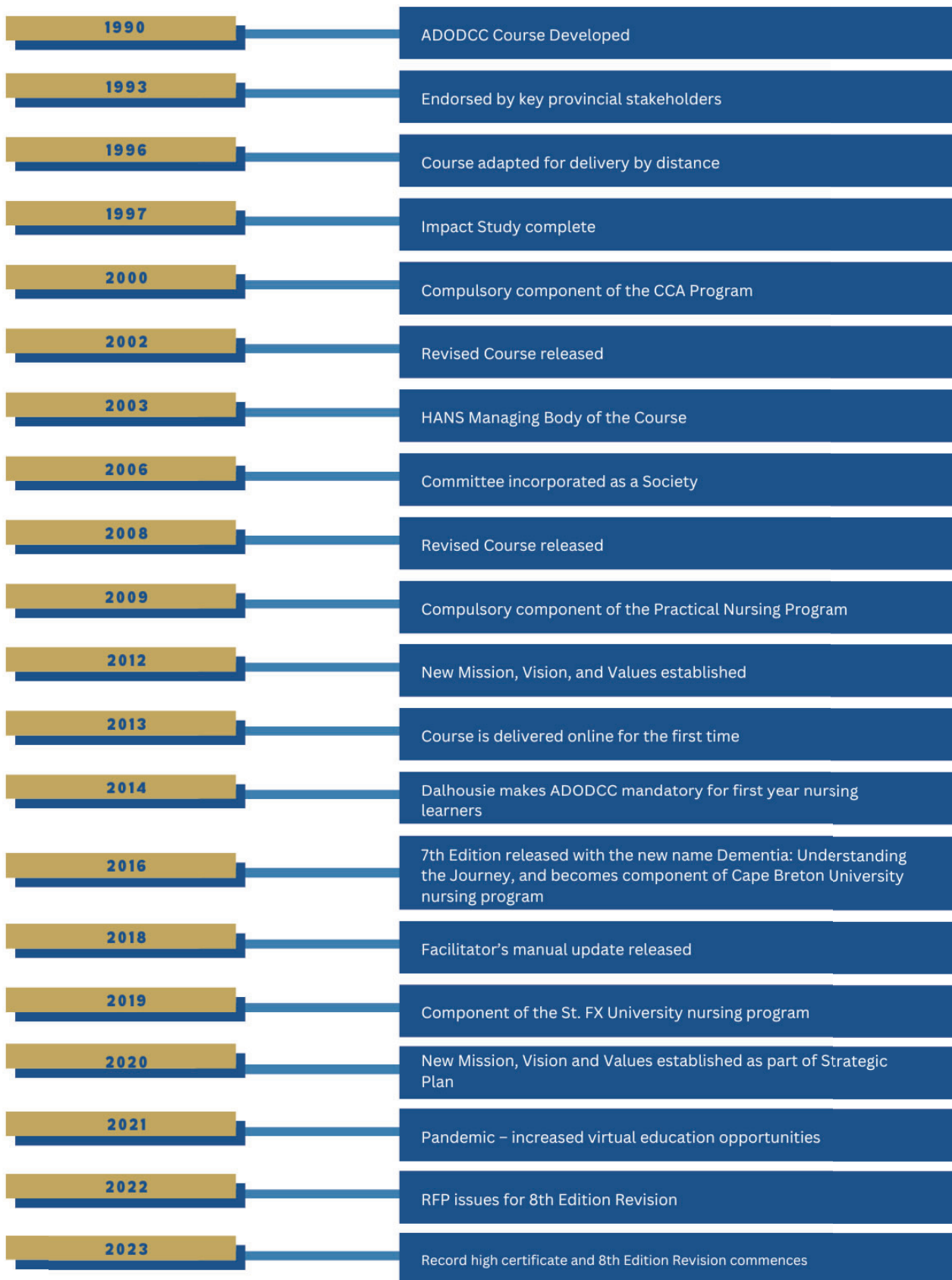
The efforts of the Society benefit from the diverse and passionate Board members and are further enhanced by strong relationships with health care employers and employer associations, the Department of Health and Wellness, the Department of Seniors and Long-Term Care, the Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia, the Nova Scotia Centre on Aging, post-secondary education institutions, and Veterans' Services Canada. Together we seek to maintain and build upon the success of the DUTJ course.

Learner Evaluation Quote:

“This project, focusing on supporting persons living with dementia, brought about a profound alteration in my attitude and behaviour. The transformation commenced with an enriched comprehension of the diagnosis itself, fostering a deeper understanding and empathy towards those individuals living with dementia. In conjunction with this personal transformation, the project also introduced me to creative communication strategies and insights into the behaviours associated with dementia. These practical methodologies, though initially challenging, gradually unfolded as invaluable tools for my development as a CCA.”



How We Got Here



DUTJ Board

The Dementia: Understanding the Journey Society is incorporated and has ownership of the Dementia: Understanding the Journey Program. The Board works tirelessly to meet the goals of the Society and is passionate and devoted to dementia care.

The Society's main objectives:

- a. Establish standards and content, review, evaluate and revise DUTJ.
- b. Promote and monitor the delivery of DUTJ.
- c. Identify issues related to the care of persons affected by Alzheimer's Disease and other dementias, and forward recommendations to the appropriate bodies or individuals.
- d. Ensure that sufficient resources are in place to sustain DUTJ.
- e. Promote the affairs to the Society.

Through the Board, the Society demonstrates a commitment to diversity of leadership within its membership and directorship. Membership is a three (3) year term with one renewable term. New members are sought via the selection process and are expected to be active participants on the board, including attending and participating in meetings and business.

Nominations to fill vacancies on the Board are accepted from individuals and designated organizations, as detailed in the Board membership. The Board will make the final selection of membership from the information provided in the nominations.

There were four new members welcomed to the DUTJ Board this year:

- Katrina Owen
- Christel MacAloney
- Callie Kerr
- Brenda Etheridge

Outgoing Members

There were no outgoing members this year.

The Board is looking to fill two vacant seats. If you or a member of your team is interested in joining the Board, we would welcome the nomination.

Vacant Seats

- Veteran's Services Representative
- Continuing Care (Home Care) Representative



Accomplishing Our Goals

As part of our strategic planning process, the Dementia: Understanding the Journey Society follows the mission, vision, and values below.

Providing quality dementia education while embracing the future and expanding the Boards' reach are primary objectives of Board. This goal helps the Board focus on achieving the Mission, and Vision set during the Strategic Planning; and ensuring that the work aligns with and models the course values.



MISSION

To embrace Dementia education as a tool to enhance quality of life



VISION

Excellent dementia care for all



VALUES

- Innovation that fuels transformation
- Life-long learning that is person-centered, evidence-informed and current
- Dynamic relationships built on collaboration

Learner Evaluation Quote:

"I adore the way the instructor conducts the lesson and never puts any pressure on any individual learner. She is incredibly friendly and graciously responds to all of our inquiries."



Our Year in Review

In continually working towards the Society's mission, vision, and values; the Board has been diligently achieving the strategic direction (Focus Areas) established in 2020.

Strategic Direction focus areas include:

1. Closing the gap between education offerings and the practice setting culture.
2. Enhancing Curriculum Design
3. Advocate for system change and person-centred care culture throughout education.

For the Board's 5-year strategic plan, we again focused dominantly on the first two strategic directions: close the gap between education and practice and enhance curriculum design; however, the Board has also been advocating for system change and person-centred care culture throughout education.

Closing the Gap Between Education & Practice

The first focus area "Close the gap between education and practice setting" translates to building awareness of education being delivered in relation to dementia, collaborating with programs to strengthen overall dementia education including DUTJ, and promoting the relevant role DUTJ plays in education and connections to practice.

Providing consistent foundational knowledge integrated across three key members of the care team (CCAs, LPNs, and RNs,) provides a vital link in closing the gap between education and practice. The promotion of standardized foundational expectations and language within the healthcare team creates a stronger culture of safety and care for persons living with dementia. We celebrate the education partners who place the DUTJ course as a priority and continue to include it as an integral part of the CCA Program, Practical Nursing Program and Bachelor of Nursing Program in Nova Scotia.

A part of this focus area is to support leaders to understand the fundamentals of the program, the connection between education and practice for a culture of safety and the need to continue learning and practicing after taking the DUTJ Program.

Each year we collect course evaluations; these evaluations help us improve the course delivery, content, tools and overall integration of learning.

Overall feedback is extremely positive and demonstrates the vital role this foundational education plays for individuals in the healthcare sector, as well as those supporting family members and the community at large.

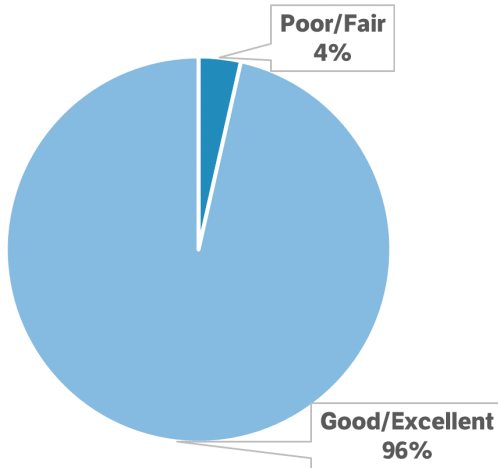
As demonstrated through the course statistics outlined below, the courses are attended by diverse healthcare sectors/settings and roles, there is strong satisfaction reported by learners (96%), there is improvement of knowledge and skills reported by learners (97%), the majority of course tools are useful; and learners report the final project is relevant (91%).



Course Satisfaction

While completing their course evaluation, DUTJ learners were asked to rate their satisfaction level with the DUTJ Course. The majority (96%) of participants reported a very strong satisfaction level.

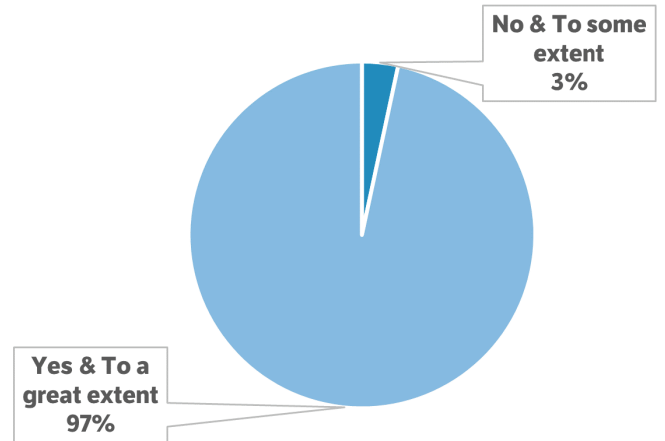
2023-2024 Course Satisfaction (%)



Improved Knowledge and Skills

Learner feedback collected through course evaluations supports the Board's goal to close the gap between education and practice. The majority of learners (97%) reported the course improved their overall knowledge and skills.

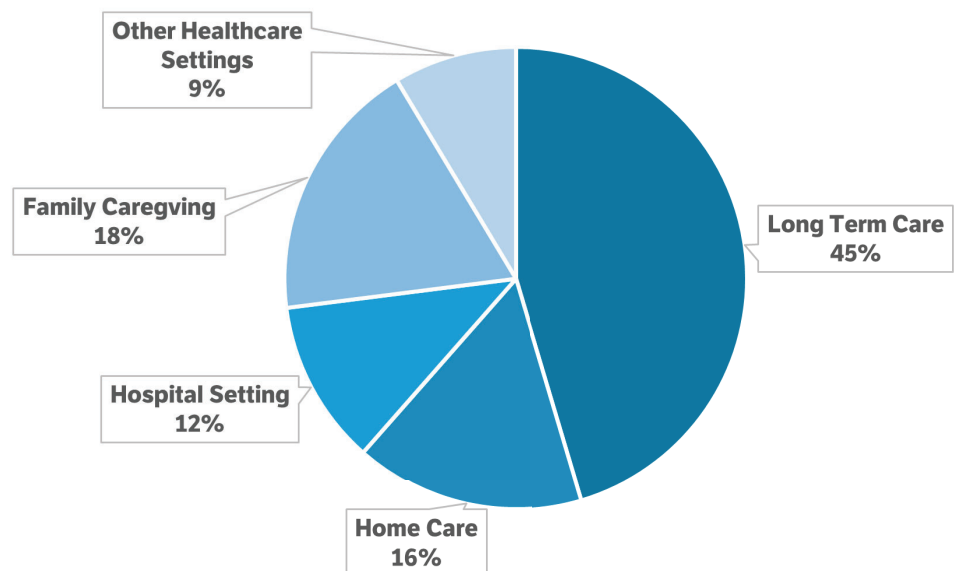
2023-2024 Improved Knowledge & Skills (%)



Care Settings Represented

DUTJ learners come from a variety of care environments, including long-term care (45%), home care, hospitals, family caregiving, and other healthcare settings (9%). This helps to market the program to many sectors and individuals in different roles.

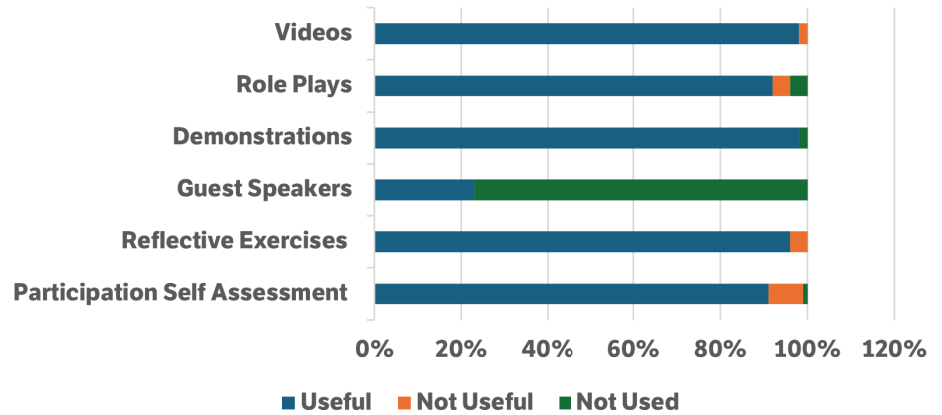
2023-2024 Learner Work Settings (%)



Usefulness of Program Tools

Learners indicated the adult learning focused tools embedded in the course are useful and relevant for the education. The main tools used during the course are the self-assessments (91%), reflective exercises (96%), role plays (92%) and videos (98%).

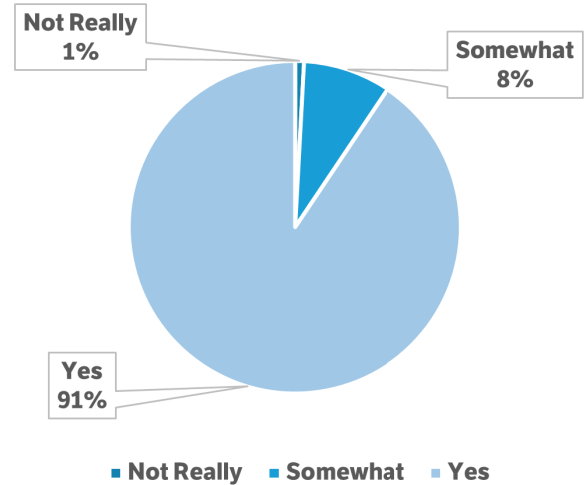
2023-2024 Learners Usefulness Ratings (%)



Final Project Relevance

The DUTJ Program has a final project required at the end of the course; the purpose of the project is to allow students to demonstrate their ability to integrate the course into their life. Identifying key elements that resonated for them and how they plan to adopt the DUTJ philosophy into their daily practice are showcased in the project. The vast majority (91%) indicated the project gave them the opportunity to demonstrate what they learned in the course.

2023-2024 Project Relevance (%)



Learner Evaluation Quote:

“I feel every part of being a CCA is a learning experience and when it comes to dementia, it is an ongoing learning journey.”



Enhancing Curriculum Design

Key priorities established by the Board for enhancing curriculum design include developing/ designing a leadership engagement package, enhancing facilitator criteria, and creating a focused strategy for targeted niches/diverse target markets.

A part of enhancing curriculum is ensuring relevance and currency of the DUTJ Course. The Review and Revision process operates on a 5-year cycle, unless otherwise triggered in response to significant changes in research/content.

Starting this year the Board is honoured to be working with the Nova Scotia Centre on Aging (CoA) to complete the Review and Revision of the DUTJ Course. CoA was the successful proponent resulting from the Request for Proposal process.

CoA has been working diligently on the review and revision of the course and tools, starting with a review of the current course. There were many activities CoA conducted prior to revising of the course, including:

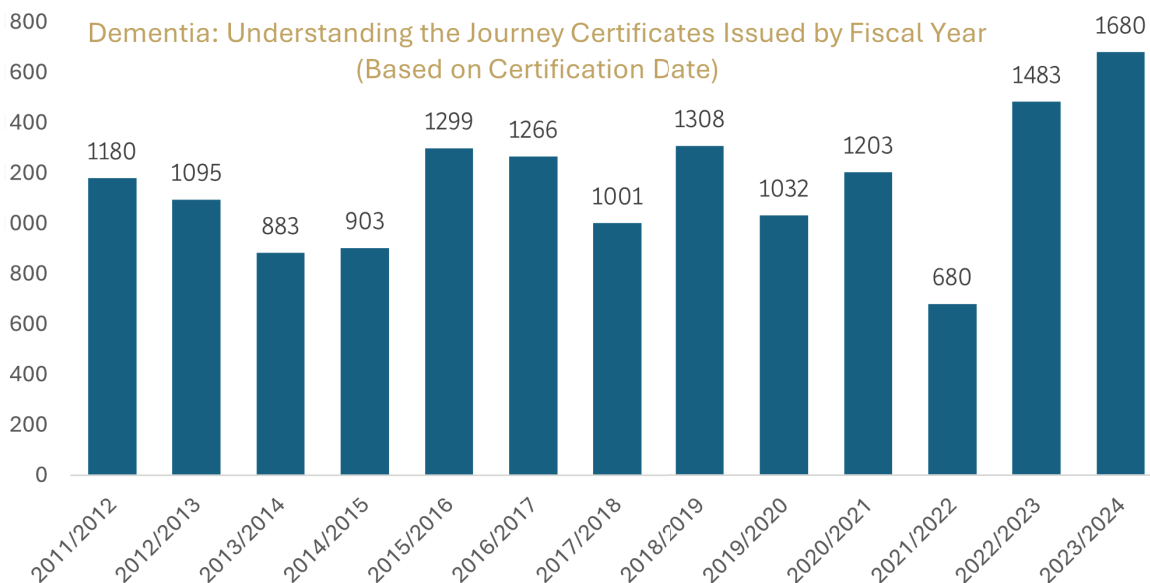
- Conducted a literature search (peer reviewed and grey)
- Consulted with sector partners, facilitators, Board members, and graduates
- Reviewed the learner and facilitator course evaluations
- Consulted with session-specific and course subject matter experts
- Provided recommendations to the Board for proposed changes/modifications to the course, including language, session content, and organization

In February, 2024, the Board approved all recommendations made by CoA and the revision to the course started.

Course Delivery and Statistics

Between the continued pressures facing Nova Scotia employers recruiting nursing and nonregulated staff, and the CCA Free Tuition Department of Seniors and Long-Term Care Initiative, the DUTJ Program saw record high enrollments again this year and it is expected this will continue for the following fiscal year.

For the fiscal year April 1, 2023, to March 31, 2024, 35 organizations delivered 106 courses which resulted in a total of 1680 certificates issued. The table below represents certificates issued over the past 14 years:

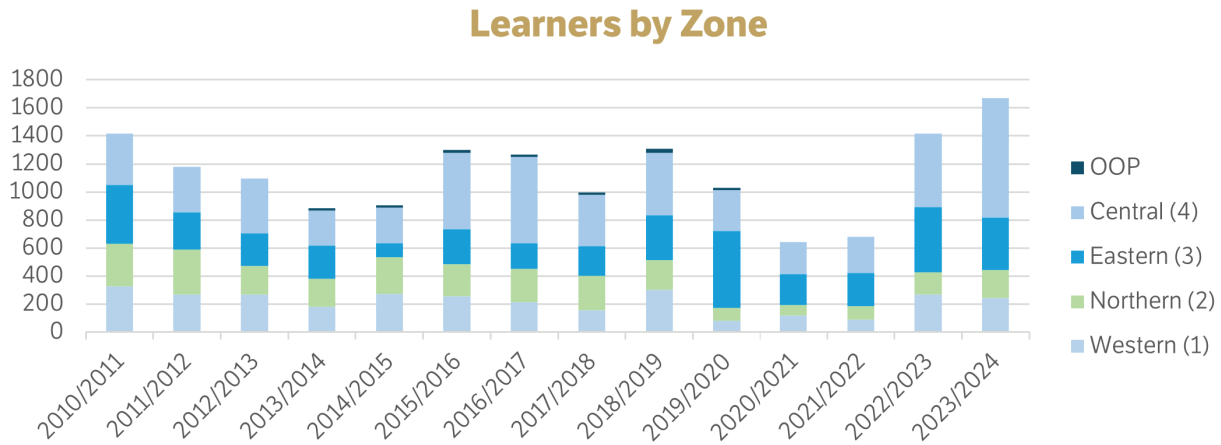


*The significant decline in 2021/2022 was due to a decline in CCA Program Enrollments due to COVID-19 capacity limits



Course Delivery and Statistics cont'd

The chart below outlines the zones where the learners took the course. Note the moderate disbursement between all zones (1-4).



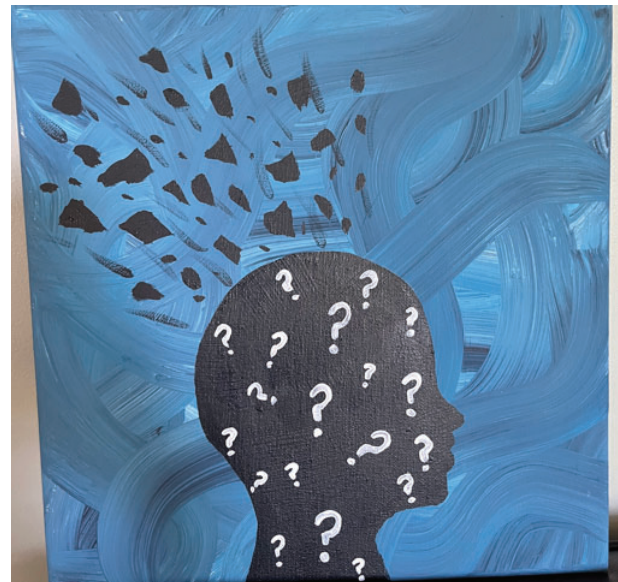
Upon completing the course, learners submit an information form which asks them to indicate their role (student, health care professional, administration, etc.) and role type (CCA, LPN, RN, Dietary, etc.). This information helps us understand more about the learner population of the course and how it evolves over time. The DUTJ Program relies heavily on partnerships with like-minded organizations such as the Alzheimer’s Society NS, and health education programs such as the CCA Program, the Practical Nursing (PN) Program, and the Nursing Degree (BScN) Programs. These partnerships allow us to continue to grow and evolve as a program and adopt the most recent examples of excellence.

Project Samples

We would like to give credit to Anne Pfneisl and Kayla Dillman for their DUTJ final project submissions below. These learners have showcased their learning from DUTJ in unique and creative ways, and we are so happy they were willing to share these submissions.



Submission by Anne Pfneisl



Submission by Kayla Dillman



Advocating for System Change and Person-Centred Care

Although more difficult to measure is the advocacy role the Board plays within the health system, the Board works tirelessly to promote the goals of the course, maintain connection and relevance for current education programs (CCA, PN, BScN), while exploring other options to expand.



Learner Evaluation Quote:

“It was an eye opener to me, and I endeavor to accomplish my mission statements that I developed during the course.”

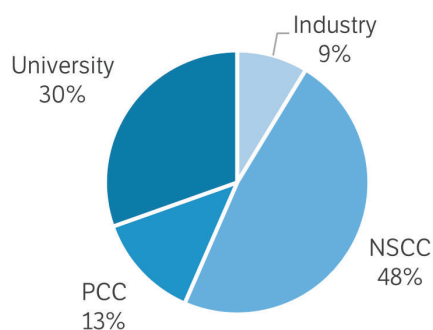


Facilitator Orientation

The Dementia: Understanding the Journey Board is committed to its mission, to embrace Dementia education as a tool to enhance quality of life. Although adapted in response to COVID-19, the DUTJ Program is consistently being delivered in a blended, online format. Virtual education has offered the opportunity to see groups come together provincially, nationally, and internationally.

Having a virtual option for the Facilitator Orientation continues to create wider accessibility for interested facilitators across the province and strengthens the out of province (OOP) learners, which will eventually allow for access outside Nova Scotia. In August, 2023 and January, 2024, the Dementia: Understanding the Journey Society hosted 2 virtual facilitator orientation sessions. These orientations introduced 23 new facilitators to the course materials. Attendees came from a variety of settings, with NSCC having the highest number of participants (48%).

2023/2024 Facilitator Orientation



These virtual sessions were facilitated by Marlene Fairhurst-Vaughan. They featured a review of course materials, activities to get to know the manuals, an introduction to the online facilitator's toolkit and a review of administrative procedures. As a part of the evaluation, the newly orientated facilitators indicated the sessions were helpful and engaging.

QUOTES FROM FACILITATOR EVALUATIONS

"The interactive nature of the training was very engaging and helpful."

"I enjoyed the group work aspects. This made it easier to engage in the content being presented. Marlene has a soothing voice that made it easy to understand what we were tasked with and how we can facilitate this course successfully."

"I enjoyed the session as it allowed for clarification of concepts to cover during the weeks, flexibility in teaching styles, and has a person-centered focus."

"I really enjoy the breakout sessions where lived life experiences and clinical backgrounds were shared."

Conferences

As with other years, we sponsored and participated in the excellent blended conference presented by the Alzheimer's Society of Nova Scotia.

We were invited to be a member of the planning and development committee for the Alzheimer's Society Conference; this was a fantastic and educational experience for us. During the conference we sponsored four course vouchers, each voucher covers the cost for the winner to take the program anywhere in NS.

Also, this past year we sponsored and hosted a booth at the Northwood Symposium which was well received and enjoyed, and again provided a fabulous educational experience. During the conference we sponsored four course vouchers each voucher covers the cost for the winner to take the program anywhere in NS.



Board of Directors and Administration

NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION	REPRESENTING	APPOINTED/ TERM END
SACHA NADEAU sacha.nadeau@asns.ca	Alzheimer Society Nova Scotia	Appointed
PAUL FIELDHOUSE paul.fieldhouse@nshealth.ca	Responsive Behaviours	Appointed
CAITLIN WRIGHT caitlin.wright@nshealth.ca	Mental Health	Appointed
KATRINA OWEN katrina.owen@novascotia.ca	Department of Seniors and Long-Term Care	Appointed
KAREN BRIAND kbriand@stfx.ca	Education Institution (Public)	February, 2025
CHRISTEL MACALONEY christelm@futureworx.ca	Education Institution (Private)	October, 2026
ROBERTA DUCHESNE roberta.duchesne@nshealth.ca	Acute Care	June, 2025
CARRIE FRAZIER cfrazier@hvh.ca	Continuing Care (LTC)	March, 2025
BRENDA ETHERIDGE brenda.etheridge@nshealth.ca	Continuing Care (Open)	October, 2026
CALLIE KERR callie.kerr@seaviewmanor.ca	Continuing Care (Open)	October, 2026
JOANNE HUGHES joannehughes2@gmail.com	Member at Large	March, 2027
MARLENE FAIRHURST-VAUGHAN mfvaughan@gmail.com	Vice-Chair/Member at Large	March, 2027
JODY MACDONALD jodymac@hotmail.ca	Chair/Member at Large	March, 2027
VACANT	Continuing Care (Home Care)	
VACANT	Veterans Services	
CAILLEAGH SHARPLES cailleagh.sharples@healthassociation.ns.ca	Treasurer/Secretary Course Administration	
SHAUNA HUNTLEY shauna.huntley@healthassociation.ns.ca	Course Administration	

Calls for nominations are issued when positions are available. Nominations to fill vacancies on the Board are accepted from individuals as well as designated organizations. The Board makes the final selection of membership using a selection matrix.





DEMENTIA: UNDERSTANDING THE JOURNEY

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