

## Where is the line between being friendly and being a friend in care?



It is one of the most common conversations in social care—and one of the most misunderstood.

Good Launex Dementia Carer Specialists™ are warm, present, and genuinely engaged. They notice the small things, share moments of connection, and create a sense of safety. That warmth is not an extra. It is the foundation of trust. Without it, care becomes task-driven, distant, and disconnected.

But warmth is not the same as friendship.

Friendship is mutual, equal, and freely chosen. A care relationship is none of those things. It exists because one person needs support, and the other is trained and trusted to provide it. That does not make it less meaningful—it makes it more responsible.

The conversation around boundaries often assumes that distance creates safety. In dementia care, that is not always true.

People living with dementia rely on familiarity, repetition, and emotional recognition to make sense of their world. When the same Launex Dementia Carer Specialist™ is present consistently, something important happens. The person is not just recognising the face—they are building a felt sense of safety. That familiarity becomes a stabilising anchor. It allows behaviour to be understood earlier, distress to be reduced quicker, and trust to form in a way that supports care rather than disrupts it.

In this context, attachment is not a failure of boundaries. It is often a necessary outcome of good care.

A consistent carer does not weaken safeguarding—it strengthens it. Challenging behaviour becomes easier to recognise, earlier to respond to, and safer to support because the carer understands the person, their patterns, and the meaning behind their behaviour. Trust becomes the bridge that allows care to happen without resistance.

The real risk is not the relationship. The real risk is inconsistency.

When that familiar carer is suddenly absent—through rota changes, leave, or staff turnover—the person is not simply “missing someone.” The brain experiences a break in continuity. The expectation it has built can no longer be met. This is where confusion increases, distress escalates, and behaviours intensify. It is not because attachment was wrong. It is because stability was removed.

This is where generic boundary thinking falls short.

Boundaries are not about preventing connection. They are about ensuring that connection is held safely, consistently, and with professional awareness. A trained Launex Dementia Carer Specialist™ knows how to build trust without losing judgement, how to connect without creating unmanaged dependency, and how to support the person even when the relationship itself becomes part of what the brain relies on.

This is not about being distant. It is about being reliable.

If you manage a team, this cannot be a one-off conversation at induction. It must be built into supervision, reflective practice, and team culture. Consistency of approach across carers matters just as much as consistency of presence. Without it, even the best intentions can create confusion.

At Launex, this is exactly what we train for. Launex Dementia Carer Specialists™ who understand not just what to do, but how the brain is changing, how behaviour is formed, and how trust, routine, and attachment interact within that process. Because when you understand the mechanism, you stop relying on rigid rules and start delivering care that is both structured and human.

Being friendly says: *I see you, I am here with you.* Being a friend says: *We are equals.*

In dementia care, the skill is something more precise.

It is knowing how to build trust without losing structure.

It is knowing how to create familiarity without creating instability.

It is knowing how to be consistent in a world that no longer feels consistent.

That is what separates good intentions from truly effective care.

If this is a conversation happening in your team, your organisation, or even within your own practice, then it is worth asking a deeper question—are your carers trained to understand where the line sits, or are they expected to “figure it out” through experience alone?

Because in dementia care, this line is not just professional—it is neurological.

At Launex, we train Dementia Carer Specialists™ to understand the thinking process behind behaviour, the brain changes driving it, and how consistency, trust, and attachment interact

within that reality. This is what allows carers to move beyond task-based care and into structured, confident, and truly responsive support.

If you want your team to deliver care that reduces distress, builds trust, and holds consistency even in complex environments, then it starts with how they are trained to understand the person in front of them.

You can explore our training through the Coaching & Training section at <https://launexltd.com> or contact us directly at [info@launexltd.com](mailto:info@launexltd.com) to discuss how we can support your team.

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