

DEMENTIA & ALZHEIMER'S TRAINING



Dementia Facts

Anyone that has worked with those suffering from dementia know that it is a frustrating and devastating disease. A diagnosis of dementia can have a dramatic and emotional impact on both the individual diagnosed and their loved ones who will help care for them. Both may experience emotions of grief, loss, anger, shock, fear, disbelief and even relief. Demonstrating compassion and patience is a must for those coping with these emotions.

Here are some quick facts from the Alzheimer Association:

- **More than 5 million** Americans are currently living with Alzheimer's disease. **By 2050, this number is projected to rise to nearly 14 million.**
- Alzheimer's is the **6th leading cause of death** in the United States. **5th Leading over 65**
- **1 in 3 Seniors die with Alzheimer's or another form of dementia.** It kills more than breast cancer and prostate cancer combined.
- **Almost two-thirds of Americans with Alzheimer's are women.**
- **In 2020, Alzheimer's and other dementias will cost the nation \$305 billion.** By 2050, these costs could rise as high as \$1.1 trillion.



What is Dementia?

According to the Alzheimer's Association, "dementia" is considered "a chronic or persistent disorder of the mental processes caused by brain disease or injury and marked by memory disorders, personality changes, and impaired reasoning". The illnesses or disorders grouped under the umbrella of "dementia" are caused by changes of the brain that are deemed abnormal in medicine. The progression of dementia promotes a **decline in general thinking skills, or cognitive abilities**, that are severe enough to **impair daily life** and an individual's ability to independently function. Dementia can also affect behaviors, feelings, and relationships.



Causes of Dementia:

Dementia takes a toll on the brain by damaging the brain cells. Such damage does not allow the cells within the brain to communicate effectively with each other.

Ineffective brain communication does affect an individual's ability to think, behave, and feel as they had been accustomed to.

There are specific parts or regions of our brains that control essential certain aspects of our everyday lives'. These include things such as memory, judgement, and our movements. Depending on where the damage from dementia occurs within the brain, is where that specific region damaged cannot carry out its normal functions.

The Alzheimer's Association states, "Different types of dementia are associated with particular types of brain cell damage in particular regions of the brain. For example, in Alzheimer's disease, high levels of certain proteins inside and outside brain cells make it hard for brain cells to stay healthy and to communicate with each other. The brain region called the hippocampus is the center of learning and memory in the brain, and the brain cells in this region are often the first to be damaged. That's why memory loss is often one of the earliest symptoms of Alzheimer's".

Types of Dementia



1 Alzheimer's

Symptoms of Alzheimer's usually begin to appear around age 60 or later, although in rare cases symptoms can begin as young as 30.

2 Vascular Dementia

Vascular dementia is the most preventable form of the disease, because it can only occur when there is a blockage in the arteries.

3 Mixed Dementia

Often, Vascular dementia and Alzheimer's can occur together.

4 Alcoholic Dementia

Alcoholic dementia is caused by excessive drinking, which leads to a deficiency in B vitamin absorption.

5 Huntington's Disease

Concentration and short-term memory begin to fade, though patients usually remember people and places until the very late stages of the disease.

6 Traumatic Brain Injury

While memory loss has been seen in those who have suffered a concussion or other brain injury, repeated damage can lead to Alzheimer's.

7 Lewy Body Dementia

Lewy bodies are proteins that accumulate inside of neurons. These proteins cause continuous damage to brain cells and neurological pathways, leading to symptoms of dementia.

7 TYPES OF DEMENTIA

www.thetruthaboutcancer.com

Stages of Dementia

There are “stages” of dementia represented on a scale used to determine where along the scale an individual might be. The stages include:

Stage 1: No impairment. The patient has no problems.

Stage 2: Questionable impairment. Patient begins to have some difficulty but can still function independently.

Stage 3: Mild impairment. The patient has obvious, but still mild difficulty with daily activities.

Stage 4: Moderate impairment. The patient needs help with caring for him or herself as well as with carrying out daily activities.

Stage 5: Moderate to severe impairment

Stage 6: Severe Impairment; patients are unable to function independently.

Stage 7: Very severe impairment. Body and mental functions begin to fail.

The Stages of Alzheimer's Disease

To better understand how Alzheimer's disease affects the Hypothalamus and other regions of the brain, it's helpful to first have an understanding of the seven primary stages of this progressive disease.

The FAST scale was developed at the New York University Medical Center's Aging and Dementia Research Center.





CDC “The Truth about Aging and Dementia I

Normal Aging

Heart and blood vessels: **Stiffening of arteries and blood vessels** makes the heart work harder. **Physical activities** such as walking long distances or walking uphill may **become more difficult**.

Bones: **Bones shrink and reduce in density**, making them more fragile and likely to break. Cartilage in joints may start wearing away, which can cause some pain or stiffness.

Muscles: **Muscles lose strength, flexibility, and endurance** over time. Muscle mass **decreases 3-5% every decade after 30** years of age, and that rate increases over age 60.

Bladder and bowel: The ability for the bladder to stretch and then go back to its normal shape may be reduced. This may cause the bladder to hold less urine than before, resulting in more **frequent trips to the bathroom**. **Changes in bowel can lead to constipation**.

Vision: **Changes in vision can include far-sightedness**, a result of the hardening of the lens. **Cataracts**, a clouding of the lens in the eye that affects vision, may develop. This can cause blurry vision and ultimately blindness if not treated.

Mental health: Aging is a process with many changes. Some people may be depressed, although others may have a sense of fulfillment.



CDC “The Truth about Aging and Dementia II

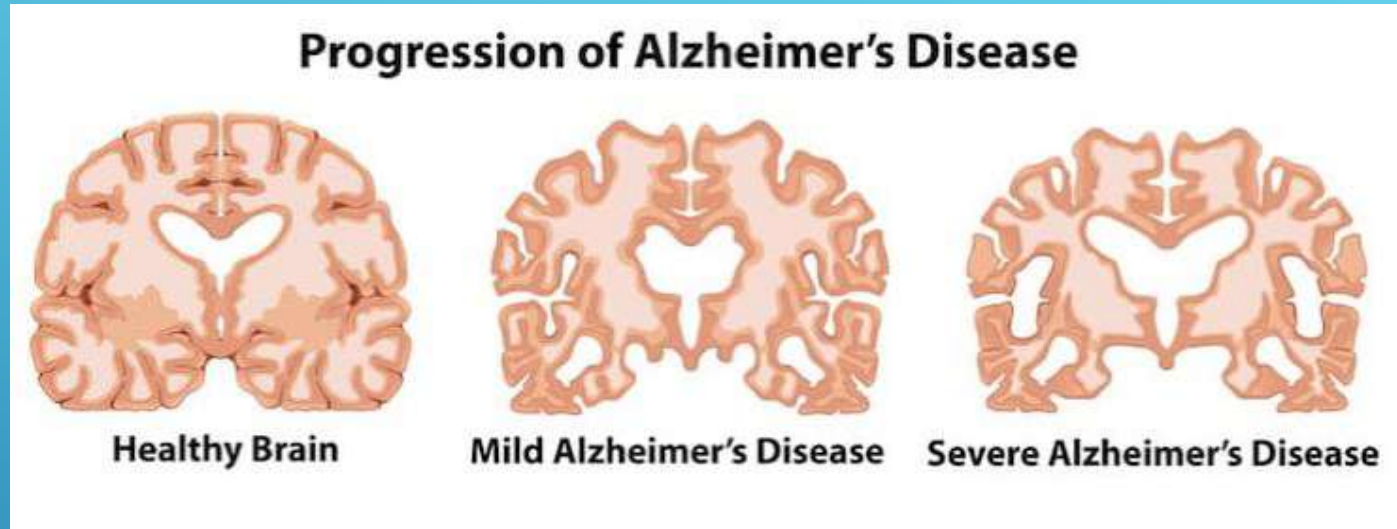
Abnormal Aging

Dementia is a term for a collection of symptoms of cognitive decline including disruptions in language, memory, attention, recognition, problem solving, and decision-making that interferes with daily activities. Although 5.8 million people in the U.S. have dementia, it is not a form of normal aging in the brain.

- Not being able to complete tasks independently.
- Difficulty with naming items or close family members.
- Forgetting the function of items.
- Repeating questions.
- Taking much longer to complete customary tasks.
- Misplacing items frequently.
- Being unable to retrace steps and getting lost.

(<https://www.cdc.gov/aging/publications/features/dementia-not-normal-aging.html>)

Alzheimers Vizualized



- ▶ Alzheimer's etymology – Brain death
- ▶ Alzheimer's can reduce brain mass by 55-75%
- ▶ Imagine if this was observable. How would we treat residents differently?
- ▶ How is their day to day affected?



Communication Challenges

► Communication is essential to thrive in life. This is especially true when achieving positive healthcare outcomes for those we serve who might be struggling with dementia. Anyone that has traveled to another country knows how frustrating it can become when you do not feel as if you are being properly understood. Those struggling with dementia speak a different “language”. It is up to us to assist them in being understood and assisting them in their cares. The following are the challenges that you will face as individuals suffering from dementia, progress through the stages of dementia.



Communication Challenges: Early-Stage

► Early-stage dementia (mild dementia): the individual is still able to socially engage and have conversations that are productive. However, they might become more easily anxious, overwhelmed, and repeat themselves. Here are some suggestions to effectively communicate with those with mild dementia-

- Do not make assumptions about a person's ability to communicate because of an Alzheimer's diagnosis. The disease affects each person differently.
- Do not exclude the person with the disease from conversations.
- Speak directly to the person rather than to his or her caregiver or companion.
- Take time to listen to the person express his or her thoughts, feelings and needs.
- Give the person time to respond. Do not interrupt unless help is requested.
- Ask what the person is still comfortable doing and what he or she may need help with.
- Discuss which method of communication is most comfortable. This could include face-to-face conversation, email, or phone calls.
- It is OK to laugh. Sometimes humor lightens the mood and makes communication easier.
- Do not pull away; your honesty, friendship and support are important to the person.



Communication Challenges: Mid-Stage

► Mid-stage dementia (moderate dementia): the most prolonged stage of dementia. The individual will have a tougher time communicating and will require more one on one care. Here are some suggestions to effectively communicate with those with moderate dementia-

- Engage the person in one-on-one conversation in a quiet space that has minimal distractions.
- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Maintain eye contact. It shows you care about what he or she is saying.
- Give the person plenty of time to respond so he or she can think about what to say.
- Be patient and offer reassurance. It may encourage the person to explain his or her thoughts.
- Ask one question at a time.
- Ask yes or no questions. For example, "Would you like some coffee?" rather than "What would you like to drink?"
- Avoid criticizing or correcting. Instead, listen and try to find the meaning in what the person is saying. Repeat what was said to clarify.
- Avoid arguing. If the person says something you do not agree with, let it be.
- Offer clear, step-by-step instructions for tasks. Lengthy requests may be overwhelming.
- Give visual cues. Demonstrate a task to encourage participation.
- Written notes can be helpful when spoken words seem confusing.



Communication Challenges: Late-Stage

► Late-stage dementia (severe dementia): may last for week to years. Most likely will be non-verbal and may rely on means to communicate with you. Communication could include facial expressions, vocal sounds, hand gestures. This stage requires the most one on one direct care. Here are some suggestions to effectively communicate with those with severe dementia-

► Approach the person from the front and identify yourself.

- • Encourage nonverbal communication. If you do not understand what the person is trying to say, ask him or her to point or gesture.

- • Use touch, sights, sounds, smells, and tastes as a form of communication with the person.

- • Consider the feelings behind words or sounds. Sometimes the emotions being expressed are more important than what is being said.

- • Treat the person with dignity and respect. Avoid talking down to the person or as if he or she is not there.

- • It is OK if you do not know what to say; your presence and friendship are most important.

Communication Challenges: Mid Stage

