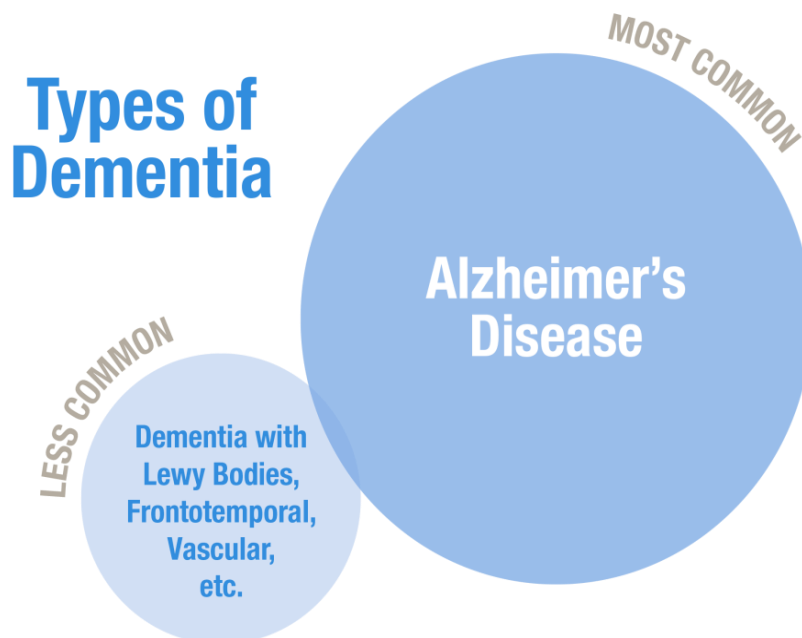




Session Workbook

Dementia: What You Should Know

Dementia is not a specific disease. It's an overall term that describes a wide range of symptoms associated with a decline in memory or other thinking skills severe enough to reduce a person's ability to perform everyday activities. Alzheimer's disease is the most common type of dementia and accounts for 60 to 80 percent of cases. Other types of dementia include Dementia with Lewy Bodies, Frontotemporal, and Vascular.



By attending today's information session, you are joining a national movement! You can learn how many Dementia Friends there are in the USA at any time by visiting dementiafriendsusa.org.

Normal Aging vs. Alzheimer's Disease

10 EARLY SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS	NORMAL AGING
1. Memory loss that disrupts daily life	Sometimes forgetting names or appointments but remembering them later
2. Challenges in planning or solving problems	Making occasional errors when balancing a checkbook
3. Difficulty completing familiar tasks at home, at work, or at leisure	Needing occasional help to use the settings on a microwave or to record a TV show
4. Confusion with time or place	Confused about the day of the week but recalling it later
5. Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships	Vision changes related to cataracts
6. New problems with words in speaking or writing	Sometimes having trouble finding the right word
7. Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps	Misplacing things from time to time and retracing steps to find them
8. Decreased or poor judgment	Making a bad decision once in a while
9. Withdrawal from work or social activities	Sometimes feeling weary of work, family, and social obligations
10. Changes in mood and personality	Developing very specific ways of doing things and becoming irritable when a routine is disrupted.

Source: 10 Early Signs and Symptoms of Alzheimer's
www.alz.org/10-signs-symptoms-alzheimers-dementia.asp

Broken Sentences Worksheet

Match the sentences in Column 1 to Column 2 by drawing a line from each sentence beginning to the corresponding sentence end. You should end up with five sentences that make sense and highlight five key messages about dementia!

Column 1

Dementia is not ...

Dementia is caused by ...

Dementia is not just ...

It is possible to have a ...

There's more to the person than ...

Column 2

... diseases of the brain. The most common is Alzheimer's.

... a normal part of aging. Not everyone who grows old will develop dementia and some people develop dementia at a younger age.

... good quality of life with dementia.

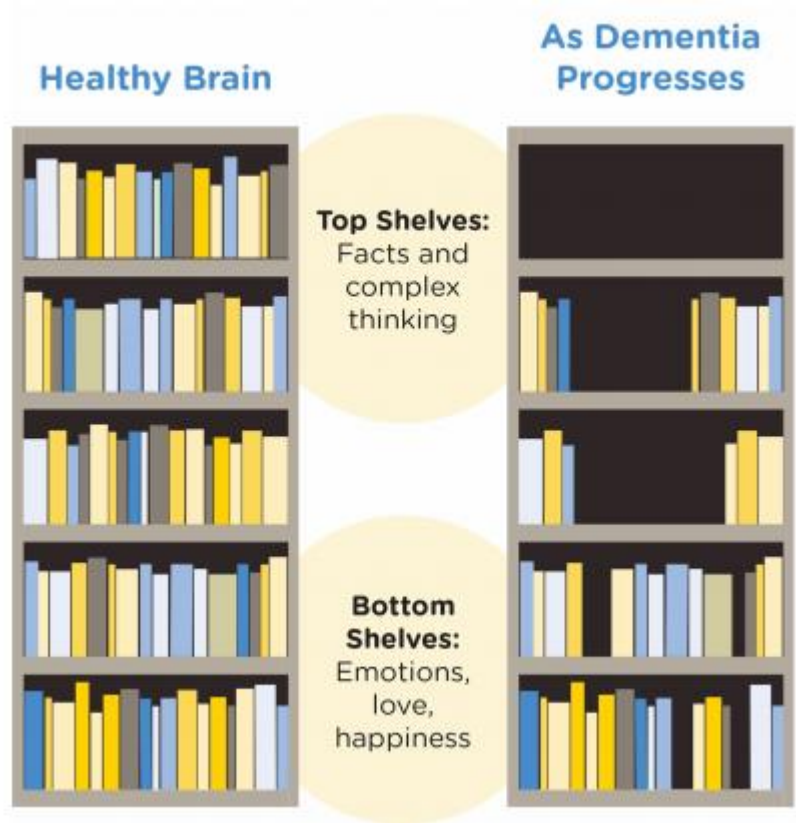
... the dementia. People with dementia are a valuable part of the community.

... about having memory problems. It can affect thinking, communication, and doing everyday tasks.

Bookcase Story

Imagine a 70-year-old woman who has dementia. Now imagine there is a full bookcase beside her. Each book inside the bookcase represents one of her skills or memories.

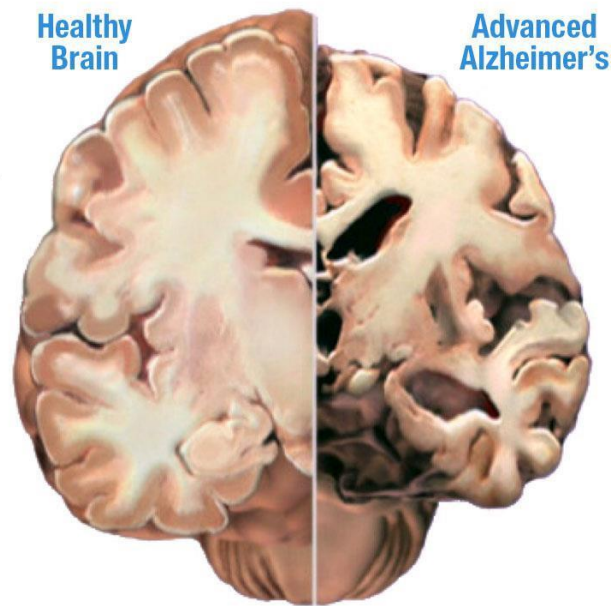
On the top shelves are her memories of facts and her skill for thinking in complex or complicated ways. For people with dementia, the top or outer part of the brain is damaged first. Skills like math, using language, and keeping one's behavior in check are in this part of the brain. In our bookcase story, these skills are also books on the top shelves.



When dementia rocks the woman's bookcase, the books on the top shelf begin to fall out. The woman may not remember what she ate for breakfast, or that she has to pay for items at the drugstore, or that someone came to visit this morning.

Emotions and feelings are lower down within the bookcase just like they are in the lower or inner part of the brain. This is the instinct area of the brain. Feelings like love, happiness, frustration, and sensing respect reside here. As dementia continues to rock her bookcase, the books on these lower shelves stay for a much longer time.

The bookcase story helps explain different thinking skills and memories and the effects of dementia. Facts and complex thinking will fall away quickly. Emotions and feelings will remain longer.



Everyday Tasks

Write a step-by-step instruction list to complete a task you do daily or often. Make sure someone reading your list could follow the instructions successfully to complete the task.

Communication

Consider these tips when communicating with a person with dementia.

- **Treat the person with dignity and respect.** Avoid talking past the person as if he or she isn't there.
- **Be aware of your feelings.** Your tone of voice may communicate your attitude. Use positive, friendly facial expressions.
- **Be patient and supportive.** Let the person know that you are listening and trying to understand. Show that you care about what he or she is saying and be careful not to interrupt.
- **Offer comfort and reassurance.** If he or she is having trouble communicating, reassure them that it's okay and encourage the person to continue.
- **Avoid criticizing or correcting.** Don't tell the person what he or she is saying is incorrect. Instead, listen and try to find the meaning in what is being said.
- **Avoid arguing.** If the person says something you don't agree with, let it be. Arguing usually only makes things worse and often increases agitation for the person with dementia.
- **Offer a guess.** If the person uses the wrong word or cannot find a word, try guessing the right word. If you understand what the person means, finding the right word may not be necessary. Some individuals living with dementia find this more confusing. If the person asks you not to offer guesses, follow his or her lead.
- **Encourage nonverbal communication.** If you don't understand what is being said, ask the person to point or gesture.

Conversation Tips

When approaching the person with dementia and starting a conversation:

- Come from the front, identify yourself, and keep good eye contact. If the person is seated or reclined, go down to that level.
- Call the person by their preferred name to get his or her attention.
- Use short, simple phrases and repeat information as needed. Ask one question at a time.
- Speak slowly and clearly. Use a gentle and relaxed tone.
- Patiently wait for a response while the person takes time to process what you said.

During the conversation:

- Provide a statement rather than ask a question. For example, say "The bathroom is right here," instead of asking, "Do you need to use the bathroom?"

- Avoid confusing and vague statements about something you want the person to do. Instead, speak directly: “Please come here. Your lunch is ready.” Name an object or place. For example, rather than “Here it is,” say “Here is your hat.”
- Turn negatives into positives. Instead of saying, “Don't go there,” say, “Let's go here.”
- Give visual cues. Point or touch the item you want the person to use or begin the task for him or her.
- Avoid quizzing. Reminiscing may be healthy, but avoid asking, “Do you remember when?”
- Try using written notes or pictures as reminders if the person is able to understand them.

Five Key Messages

1. **Dementia is not a normal part of aging.** Not everyone who grows old will develop dementia and some people develop dementia at a younger age.
2. **Dementia is caused by diseases of the brain.** The most common is Alzheimer's.
3. **Dementia is not just about having memory problems.** It can affect thinking, communication, and doing everyday tasks.
4. **It is possible to have a good quality of life with dementia.**
5. **There's more to the person than the dementia.** People with dementia are a valuable part of the community.

Turn Your Understanding into Action

No action is too big or too small - every action will make a difference.

Here are some example actions:

- I will stay in touch with someone I know living with dementia.
- I will change how I talk about dementia by saying “living with dementia” rather than “suffering with dementia.”
- I will smile and say hello instead of avoiding a person with dementia.
- I will start a conversation at work, at my child's soccer game, or with my faith community about Dementia Friends and how to become one.

Please record your Action Step here:

Resources in Your Community

Alzheimer's Association Helpline serves people with memory loss, caregivers, health care professionals, general public, diverse populations, and concerned friends and family, and provides referrals to local community programs and services, dementia-related education, crisis assistance and emotional support. 1-800-272-3900 or www.alz.org.

The Aging & Disability Resource Connection serves older adults, adults with disabilities, and caregivers across the state of Georgia. Programs are administered locally through Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs). The statewide number is 866-552-4464 or www.georgiaadrc.org.

Lewy Body Dementia Association is a nonprofit organization dedicated to raising awareness of the Lewy body dementias (LBD), supporting people with LBD, their families and caregivers and promoting scientific advances. They offer supportive services including caregiver resources and support groups. Visit www.lbda.org.

The Association for Frontotemporal Degeneration's mission is to improve the quality of life of people affected by FTD and drive research to a cure. They provide education, tools, and other resources for those living with FTD and their care partners. They have regional and local volunteer ambassadors. The AFTD HelpLine is 866-507-7222. Visit www.theaftd.org.

The Parkinson's Foundation is a non-profit organization that strives to make life better for people with Parkinson's disease by improving care and advancing research toward a cure. They offer education, tools, and resources and have local and regional support and events. Visit www.parkinson.org.

Dementia Spotlight Foundation is dedicated to supporting lives through advocacy, the arts, and dementia education. They are committed to educating both family and professional caregivers about dementia-related diseases and enhancing the supports and standards of care needed. Visit www.dementiaspotlightfoundation.org.

Rosalynn Carter Institute for Caregiving's overall goal is to support caregivers – both family and professional – through efforts of advocacy, education, research, and service. They offer tools and education specific to dementia. Visit www.rosalynncarter.org.

Reporting Abuse, Neglect, or Exploitation:

- Any setting - Call local law enforcement if abuse, neglect or exploitation is suspected (911).
- If the suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation occurs in a person's home or other community settings then contact the Division of Aging Services' Adult Protective Services Central Intake in at 1-866-552-4464.
- If the suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation occurs in a Long-Term Care Facility or Residence including a Nursing Facility, Personal Care Home (including assisted living), or Community Living Arrangement then contact the Georgia Department of Community Health, Healthcare Facility Regulation (HFR) at 1-800-878-6442.