

Education for caregivers of patients with cognitive dysfunction

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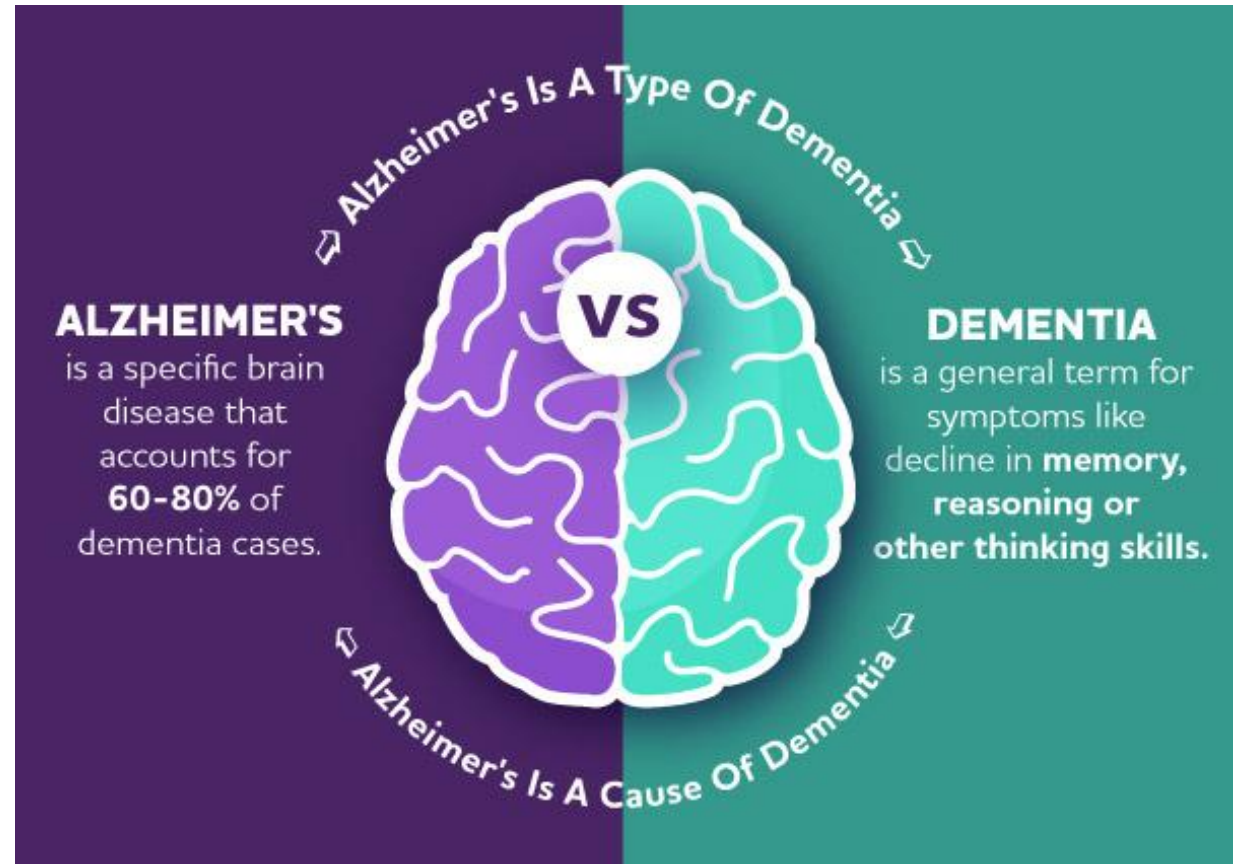
3rd Annual Caregiver Conference

WHAT IS DEMENTIA?

- Dementia is the general term for a group of brain disorders that cause memory problems and make it hard to think clearly.
- In 2020, as many as 5.8 million Americans were living with Alzheimer's disease*
- The number of people living with the disease doubles every 5 years beyond age 65*

*<https://www.cdc.gov/aging/aginginfo/alzheimers.htm#:~:text=Alzheimer's%20disease%20is%20the%20most,thought%2C%20memory%2C%20and%20language.>

- An acquired disorder that is characterized by a decline in cognition involving one or more cognitive domains (learning and memory, language, executive function, complex attention, perceptual-motor, social cognition) and most common form is Alzheimer's dementia (AD).



Symptoms of Dementia:

Possible Early symptoms	Possible Late symptoms
Difficulty recalling recent events	Increased anger or hostility, sometimes aggressive behavior or depressive behavior
Tendency to repeat stories or questions	Sleep problems
Request or require repetition of material to be able to remember	Hallucinations
Difficulties with language , driving, paying bills, cooking etc.	Disorientation
Difficulty with concentration and reasoning	Needing help with basic tasks (such as eating, bathing, and dressing)
Getting lost in a familiar place	Incontinence (difficulty controlling the bladder and/or bowels)

Caring for someone with dementia-Plans to make for future



Living Situation:

- If the person lives alone, make sure that they are safe and have the help they need to take care of themselves.
- A time will come when they cannot live alone, and it's important to plan for this.
- You might have them live at home with help or move to a nursing home.

Decision-making:

- Early on, a family member should choose a "power of attorney."
- A power of attorney is someone who can make decisions for the person when they are no longer able to.
- It's important for the power of attorney to talk to the person to understand what they would want in different situations, especially toward the end of life.



Money :

- It's important to check that they do it correctly, if they are self-managed.
- Make plan for when they are unable to manage their money without help.



Driving & Medical appointments:

- Talk with the doctor about when they should stop if still driving. The right time to stop is different for each person.
- Patient will need assistance with making medical appointments and taking their pills.



How can one make the home safe?

- Keep walkways clear of clutter
- Remove loose rugs
- keep some lights on at night
- Put a handrail and non-slip mat in the bathtub or shower
- You can also child proof certain areas
- make sure that guns/weapons are locked in a place where the person cannot get to them if any



How can one keep the family member from wandering away?

- Lock the outside door. If your family member can unlock the door, put another lock on the door that they can't reach
- Have them wear or carry identification at all times. Some people use a medical ID bracelet
- Put a system in your home that lets you know when people enter or leave





How can one make daily activities easier?

- Do activities they enjoy or can still help with.
- Plan on taking extra time for activities or to get where you are going.
- Stick to a routine and avoid new or crowded places.
- Use simple words, short sentences, and a calm voice (but don't use "baby talk"). When you give directions, give only 1 direction at a time.



How can one make daily activities easier?

- Avoid giving them too many choices. For example, offer only 2 choices for lunch.
- Buy clothes and shoes that are easy to put on and take off.
- Remember that it doesn't help to argue. Try to move on to something else.

How can one avoid bladder or bowel accidents?

- Consult a physician to determine if the cause is medical and treatable: Urinary tract infection, constipation or a prostate problem, Diabetes, stroke or a muscular disorder such as Parkinson's disease.
- Physical disabilities that prevent reaching the bathroom in time
- Medication induced

- In the earlier stages of the disease, you can limit accidents by:
- Having your family member use the toilet every few hours
- Not giving them drinks before bedtime
- In the later stages of dementia, most people will need to wear a pad or adult diaper



What if the family member isn't eating enough?

- Give them many small meals each day, instead of 3 large ones.
- Give them high-protein or high-calorie drinks, such as shakes.
- Make food easier to eat by putting it in a bowl or cutting it up.
- Try making the food taste better by adding spices, sweet and sour flavoring, or soy sauce.
- As the disease gets worse, the person might need to be fed.

How can I help my family member sleep better at night?



- ❑ Not let them nap during the day.
- ❑ Make sure that they get physical activity and sunlight during the day. Even gentle forms of exercise, like walking, have benefits. Avoid exercise right before bedtime.
- ❑ Open the shades in the morning to let light in.
- ❑ Keep their wake-up time and bedtime the same every day. Don't have them go to bed too early. Older people require less sleep than younger people, and an early bedtime could lead the person to wake up too early.
- ❑ Keep the bedroom quiet, cool, and dark at night with some night lights.
- ❑ Ask the doctor or nurse if any of your family member's medicines might be making their sleep worse.

Art and Music:

- Art can provide the person with dementia — as well as caregivers — an opportunity for self-expression.
- Music can be powerful.
- Studies have shown music may reduce agitation and improve behavioral issues.



*<https://www.alz.org/help-support/caregiving/daily-care/art-music>

Caregiver stress

Taking care of someone with Alzheimer disease is a tough job, and it usually gets harder as the disease gets worse. It is normal to feel stressed, sad, or tired. Symptoms like:

1. **Denial** about the disease and its effect i.e., I know my parent is going to get better.
2. **Anger** at the person with Alzheimer's or frustration
3. **Anxiety** about the future and facing another day
4. **Depression** that breaks your spirit
5. **Exhaustion** that makes it nearly impossible to complete necessary daily tasks
6. **Sleeplessness**
7. **Irritability** that leads to moodiness
8. **Lack of concentration**
9. **Lack of concentration**
10. **Health problems** that begin to take a mental and physical toll.

Tips to manage:

Always try to reach out to your doctor and Know what community resources are available.

- Adult day programs, in-home assistance, visiting nurses and meal delivery
- If you experience signs of stress on a regular basis, consult your doctor. Ignoring symptoms can cause your physical and mental health to decline.
- Help you manage daily tasks.
- **Get help and find support.**
- **Use relaxation techniques:**
 - Visualization (mentally picturing place or situation that is peaceful and calm)
 - Meditation
 - Breathing exercises
 - Progressive muscle relaxation



Thanks!