



# Dementia Assistance for Elders

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## Presenters

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# DEMENTIA

*Defined:* An 'umbrella' term used to describe the symptoms of a group of more than 100 conditions that impair memory, behaviours and thinking. The most common causes of dementia are outlined below.

## **Vascular dementia (VaD)**

is the second most common form of dementia accounting for 20% of cases. VaD occurs through a reduced blood supply to the brain usually due to stroke.

## **Parkinsons disease (PD)**

accounts for 5% of dementia cases. PD is a degenerative disorder of the central nervous system.

## **Alzheimers disease (AD)**

is the **most common form of dementia** accounting for 50-70%. AD is a degenerative disease that attacks the brain resulting in impaired functioning.

## **Fronto-temporal dementia (FTD)**

accounts for 5% of dementia cases. FTD is associated with rounded and tangled bundles of protein in brain nerve cells.

## **Dementia with Lewy bodies (DLB)**

accounts for 15% of dementia cases. DLB is associated with Lewy bodies which are abnormal brain cells.

# Dementia is....

Memory loss and difficulty with some of the following:

- naming
- doing
- recognizing
- behaving
- thinking
- calculating
- planning and organizing

and it interferes with function (the elder's ability to do things).

# Dementia Warning Signs

- Asking the same questions over and over again
- Lost in familiar places
- Unable to follow directions
- Confused about time
- Problems with self-care. bathing, safety
- Inappropriate behavior

# Reversible Dementias

- Intoxications
- Infections
- Metabolic disorders
- Depression
- Medication Problems
- Brain tumors
- Head injuries
- Normal pressure hydrocephalus (NPH)
- Dehydration

## Just Normal Aging!

- Forgetting a word, name, or appointment
- Date or day confusion
- Losing your keys, remote, coffee, parked car, pocket knife
- Going to the store to buy milk and getting home with no milk
- Forgetting how to change the time on your watch
- Large Print Books Required
- Startling when you walk by a mirror
- Forgetting to zip
- Enjoying a routine and not having to leave the house

## Not So Normal

- Making up a word for one you have lost “arm clock”
- Challenges in planning or following instructions
- Challenges at daily tasks
- Not knowing where you are
- Repeating yourself
- Conversing with the person in the mirror
- Wearing the same thing for days
- Poor judgment; scams
- Inability to retrace steps
- Withdrawal from favorite activities
- Personality or behavior changes

# How is dementia diagnosed?

- The story – from the elder and from family members or others.
- Cognitive testing (testing memory, calculation, problem solving, language, ability to do multi-step tasks).
- Lab tests (to be sure it is not something else).
- Sometimes but not always a brain scan (CT or MRI)

# The Stages of Alzheimer's Dementia

- **Mild**

- Still involved, frustrated, worried.
- Can still take part in care decisions
- Time to make sure things are in place

- **Moderate**

- Needing help with many things
- Needs constant attention, watching
- Can still enjoy being involved, with family

- **Severe**

- Total care

# How do we treat?

- Medications may slow the disease in about half the people who use them.
- Medications may help with behaviors – but some have risks
- Many good techniques to care for persons with dementia – and make their life better
- The right setting for care
- Manage the health care system
- Extra attention to care as they move to the next world.
- Care for the carers

# Challenges of Caregiving

- Understanding Alzheimer's and related dementias
- Identifying yourself as a “caregiver”
- Adjusting your response to changes in person you are caring for – learning how to identify and respond to challenging behaviors
- Adjusting the way you communicate – understanding non-verbal communications – understanding and taking into consideration the feelings, wants and needs of the person receiving care
- Responding to your stress and maintaining well-being
- Financial challenges
- Managing other health conditions (diabetes)

t h i n k i n g



## *Think outside the box!*

- Direct Funding Opportunities
- Partnerships
  - Work that has already occurred that you can build on?
- Free Resources
- Learning Opportunities

# Culturally Competent Dementia Resources

- REACH into Indian Country
- NICOA SAVVY Caregiver Initiative
- Music and Memory

## Learning Opportunities

- Annual Webinar Series
- Technical Assistance through National Alzheimer's and Dementia Resource Center [www.NADRC.ACL.GOV](http://www.NADRC.ACL.GOV)



# ACL Alzheimer's and Related Dementia Funding Opportunities

- Alzheimer's Disease Programs Initiative (ADPI)
  - Programs for States
  - Programs for Communities

# RESOURCES

- National Alzheimer's and Dementia Resource Center  
[WWW.NADRC.ACL.GOV](http://WWW.NADRC.ACL.GOV)
- [www.NICOA.Org](http://www.NICOA.Org)
- [www.OlderIndians.ACL.Gov](http://www.OlderIndians.ACL.Gov)
- [www.Brainhealth.gov](http://www.Brainhealth.gov)
- [www.Alzheimers.gov](http://www.Alzheimers.gov)
- Local Alzheimer's Association



THANK YOU!

