



Wisconsin Alzheimer's Institute
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Information Session

People with dementia need to be understood and supported in their communities.

You can help by becoming a Dementia Friend.

Visit

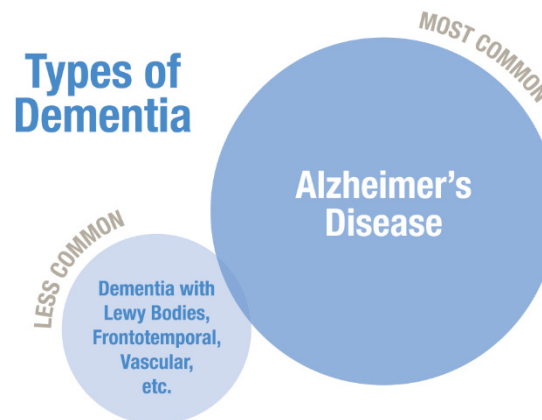
www.wai.wisc.edu/dementiafriendswi
to learn more!

With permission of Dementia Friends, Alzheimer's Society, London UK

What is Dementia?

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.



10 Early Signs & Symptoms

1. Memory loss that disrupts daily life.
2. Challenges in planning or solving problems.
3. Difficulty completing familiar tasks at home, at work or at leisure.
4. Confusion with time or place.
5. Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships.
6. New problems with words in speaking or writing.
7. Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps.
8. Decreased or poor judgment.
9. Withdrawal from work or social activities.
10. Changes in mood and personality.

Source: www.alz.org/10-signs-symptoms-alzheimers-dementia.asp

5 Key Messages

1. Dementia is not a normal part of aging.
2. Dementia is caused by diseases of the brain.
3. Dementia is not just about having memory problems.
4. It is possible to have a good quality of life with dementia.
5. There's more to the person than the dementia.

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 become five key messages about dementia!

Column 1

1. Dementia is not...

2. Dementia is caused by...

3. Dementia is not just...

4. It is possible to have a...

5. There's more to the person than...

Column 2

A. ... diseases of the brain.

B. ... the dementia.

C. ... good quality of life with dementia.

D. ... about having memory problems.

E. ... a normal part of aging.

Bookcase Story

Everyday Tasks

Healthy Brain



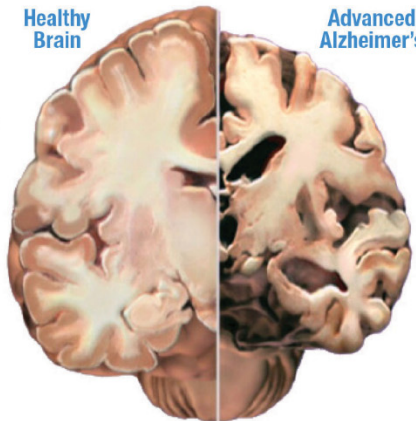
Top Shelves:
Facts and
complex
thinking

**Bottom
Shelves:**
Emotions,
love,
happiness

As Dementia Progresses



Healthy
Brain



Advanced
Alzheimer's

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

Communication Practices

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.

Offer comfort and reassurance. If the person is having trouble communicating, reassure that it's okay.

Avoid criticizing or correcting. Don't tell the person that what was said is incorrect. Instead, listen and try to find their meaning.

Avoid arguing. If the person says something you don't agree with, let it be.

Offer a guess. If the person uses the wrong word or cannot find a word, try guessing the right word.

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 isn't standing, go down to eye 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.

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 vague statements about something you want the person to do. Speak directly: "Please come here. Your lunch is ready." Another 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 yourself.
- Avoid quizzing statements like "Do you remember when?"
- Try using written notes or pictures as reminders.

Understanding into Action

As a Dementia Friend, I will...

- _____ get in touch and stay in touch with someone I know living with dementia.
- _____ be patient.
- _____ be more understanding.
- _____ carry out this personal action:

Community Resources

Alzheimer's Association Greater Wisconsin Chapter

www.alz.org/gwwi • 920-469-2110
24/7 Helpline: 800-272-3900

Alzheimer's Association Southeastern Wisconsin Chapter

www.alz.org/sewi • 414-479-8800
24/7 Helpline: 800-272-3900

Alzheimer's Association South Central Wisconsin Chapter

www.alz.org/scwisc • 608-203-8500
24/7 Helpline: 800-272-3900

Alzheimer's and Dementia Alliance of Wisconsin

www.alzwisc.org • 608-232-3400

Toll Free: 888-308-6251

Wisconsin Alzheimer's Institute Memory Clinic Network

www.wai.wisc.edu/clinic-network

Wisconsin Alzheimer's Institute Best Practice Guides

www.wai.wisc.edu/best-practice-guides

To find your local Area Agency on Aging or Aging and Disability Resource Center, visit:

www.eldercare.gov