



Welcome!

Dementia Friends is a global movement that was developed by the Alzheimer's Society in the United Kingdom, with origins in Japan's Dementia Supporter program. It is now underway in the United States.



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Session Workbook

Slides adapted from Dementia Friends Massachusetts and with permission of Dementia Friends, Alzheimer's Society, London UK. Rev. 7/2018



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- The goal is to help everyone in a community understand five key messages about dementia, how it affects people, and how we each can make a difference in the lives of people living with dementia.
- People with dementia need to be understood and supported in their communities. Dementia also has a huge impact on family members and friends, and they need support and understanding, too. You can help by becoming a Dementia Friend. Thank you for being here!



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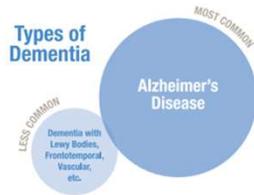
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Dementia: What You Should Know

Dementia is not a specific disease. It's an umbrella term that covers many symptoms.

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. In general, dementia gets worse over time.



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Dementia-Friendly Community



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Normal Aging vs. Alzheimer's Disease

It's normal for a person's memory to change as they grow older. We may sometimes forget names or appointments, but then remember them later.

As we get older, we may develop specific routines for doing things, and feel frustrated when these routines are interrupted.

These changes are typical with aging. Dementia is different.



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These are the 10 early signs and symptoms of dementia:

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



7

Five Key Messages



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4oIrTayLJw>



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Broken Sentences Worksheet

Match the sentences in Column 1 to Column 2 (discussion). You should end up with five sentences that make sense.

Column 1	Column 2
1 Dementia is not...	A ...diseases of the brain. The most common is Alzheimer's.
2 Dementia is caused by...	B ...the dementia. People with dementia are a valuable part of the community.
3 Dementia is not just...	C ...good quality of life with dementia. Symptoms may be mild for a long time. Everyone can feel joy and a sense of belonging with support.
4 It is possible to have a...	D ...about having memory problems. It can affect thinking, communication and doing everyday tasks.
5 There's more to the person than...	E ...a normal part of aging. Not everyone who grows old will develop dementia.



9

Five Key Messages

- Dementia is not a normal part of aging. Not everyone who grows old will develop dementia.
- Dementia is caused by diseases of the brain. The most common is Alzheimer's.
- Dementia is not just about having memory problems. It can affect thinking, communication and doing everyday tasks.
- It is possible to have a good quality of life with dementia. Symptoms may be mild for a long time. Everyone can feel joy, comfort and a sense of belonging with support.
- There's more to the person than the dementia. People with dementia are a valuable part of the community.



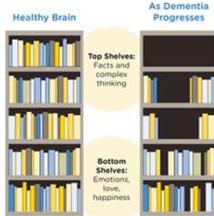
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Bookcase Story

Imagine that each of us has a bookcase, that we've been filling up throughout our lives. Each book inside the bookcase represents one of our skills or memories.

On the top shelves are our memories of facts and our skills for thinking in complicated ways. This includes skills like counting money, using language, planning our activities and making sure that our behavior fits the situation. Dementia usually damages the top or outer part of the brain first. In our story, when dementia rocks your bookcase, the top books fall out first.



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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.

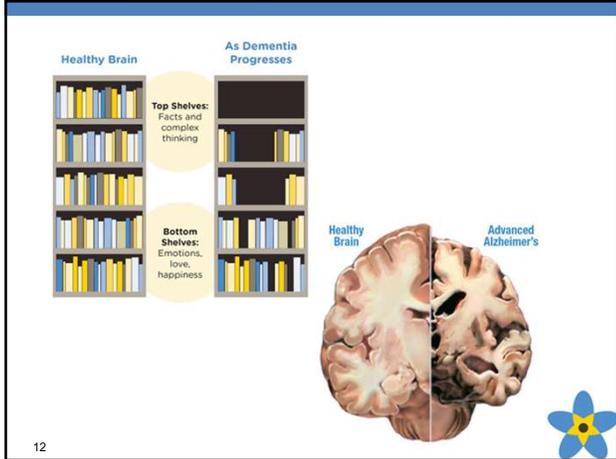
Feelings like love, happiness, frustration and sensing respect reside here. As dementia continues to damage a person's brain, the books on these lower shelves stay for a much longer time.

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



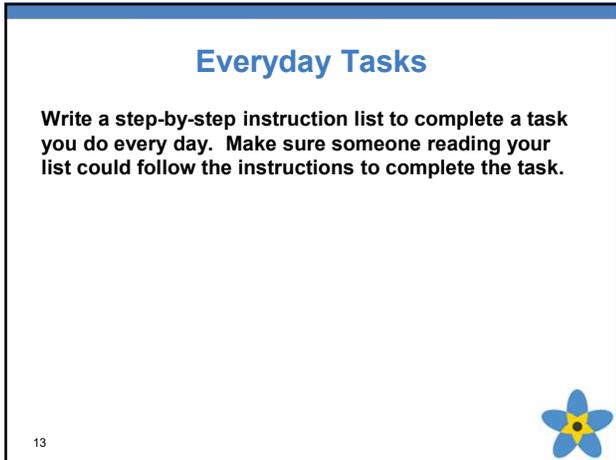
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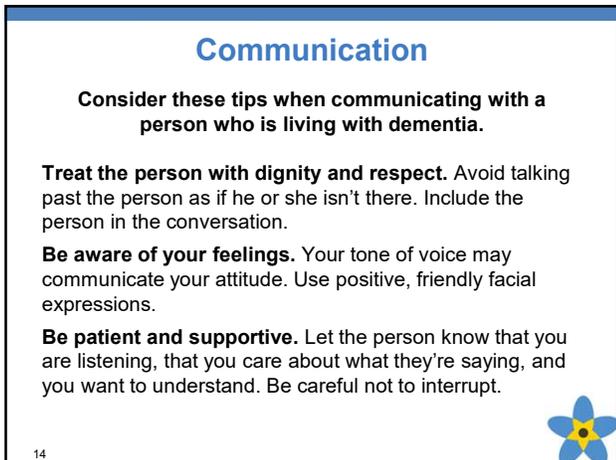
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Offer comfort and reassurance. If the person is having trouble communicating, reassure them that it's okay and encourage them to continue.

Avoid criticizing or correcting. Don't tell the person that what they are saying is incorrect. Instead, listen and try to find the meaning in what is being said. "Focus on the feelings, not the facts."

Sometimes it's easier not to use words. If you don't understand what the person is saying, ask them to point or gesture. When spending time together, listening to music together, or a gentle hug can sometimes work better than talking.

Know that an individual's communication patterns may change. In general, dementia changes a person's brain more and more over time. Communication tips that work now may not work as time goes by, and you may have to try a new approach.



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Conversation Tips

When approaching a person who is living with dementia and starting a conversation:

- Come from the front, identify yourself, and keep good eye contact. If the person is seated or reclined, sit down so that you're at eye level.
- Use short, simple phrases and repeat them if needed. Ask one question at a time.
- Speak slowly and clearly. Use a gentle and relaxed tone.
- Patiently wait for a response. Give the person time to process what you said.



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During the conversation:

- Try offering a simple statement rather than a question. For example, say, "The bathroom is right here," instead of asking, "Do you need to use the bathroom?"
- Speak directly and use the name of objects and people to make things clearer. For example, say, "Here is your hat," instead of "Here it is."
- Give visual cues. Point or touch the item you want the person to use, or demonstrate the task. Written notes or pictures may also be helpful.
- Turn negatives into positives. Instead of saying, "Don't go there," say, "Let's go here."
- Try not to ask questions like "Do you remember when?" or "Do you know who the person in this photo is?" This can feel like a quiz! Instead, share *your* memories, or "invent" stories about the photos together. This tip can be very challenging for family members and friends, because they are grieving the loss of the relationship the way it was before dementia. They need support and understanding, too.



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- Dementia is not just about having memory problems. It can affect thinking, communication and doing everyday tasks.
- It is possible to have a good quality of life with dementia. Symptoms may be mild for a long time. Everyone can feel joy, comfort and a sense of belonging with support.
- There's more to the person than the dementia. People with dementia are a valuable part of the community.



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Turn Your Understanding into Action

Please tell us how you are going to turn your understanding of dementia and what it means to be a Dementia Friend into a practical action. Every action counts.

As a Dementia Friend I will...

- get in touch and stay in touch with someone living with dementia
- be patient
- be more understanding
- carry out a personal action (please describe)



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Resources in Your Community

Learn More about Memory Loss and Dementia
The **Alzheimer's and related Dementias Education & Referral Center** with the National Institute on Aging (www.alzheimers.gov)
The **Alzheimer's Association** (www.alz.org)

Learn More about Local Programs and Services
The **Alzheimer's Association Washington State Chapter** (www.alzwa.org) provides education and support for people with any type of memory loss or dementia and their families. Their free 24-Hour Helpline (800-272-3900) is staffed by master's-level care consultants who can refer to local programs or provide decision-making support, crisis assistance and education, in over 200 languages. Reach the Spokane office by calling 509-456-0456.

Aging & Long Term Care of Eastern Washington (<https://www.altcew.org/>) is the Area Agency on Aging for Spokane and the surrounding counties. Community Living Connections (CLC) is a program of ALTCEW and provides a myriad of services and referrals to meet the needs of older adults, persons with disabilities, and their caregivers. They can be reached at 509-960-7281.



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