



Dementia  
Friends  
Washington 

A Dementia Friendly America initiative

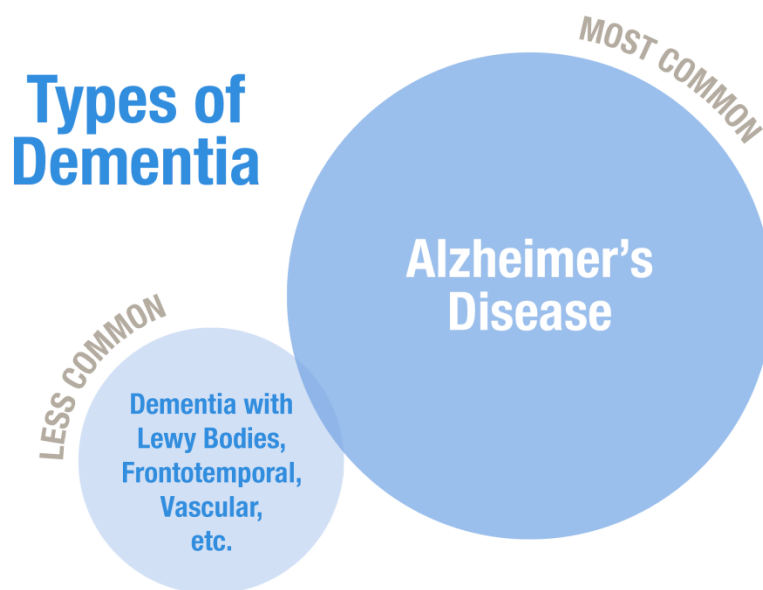
# Session Workbook

*Adapted from Dementia Friends Minnesota and with permission of Dementia Friends,  
Alzheimer's Society, London UK.*

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## 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.



## What is Dementia Friends?

Dementia Friends is a global movement developed by the Alzheimer's Society in the United Kingdom and now underway in the United States. 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 the disease. People with dementia need to be understood and supported in their communities. You can help by becoming a Dementia Friend.

## Normal Aging vs. Alzheimer's Disease

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

**Source:** 10 Early Signs and Symptoms of Alzheimer's  
[www.alz.org/10-signs-symptoms-alzheimers-dementia.asp](http://www.alz.org/10-signs-symptoms-alzheimers-dementia.asp)

## Broken Sentences Worksheet

Match the sentences in Column 1 to Column 2 by writing your response in the “Answer” column. You should end up with five sentences that make sense and highlight five key messages about dementia!

ANSWER

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) ... a normal part of aging. Not everyone who grows old will develop dementia.

3. Dementia is not just ...

c) ... good quality of life with dementia.

4. It is possible to have a ...

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

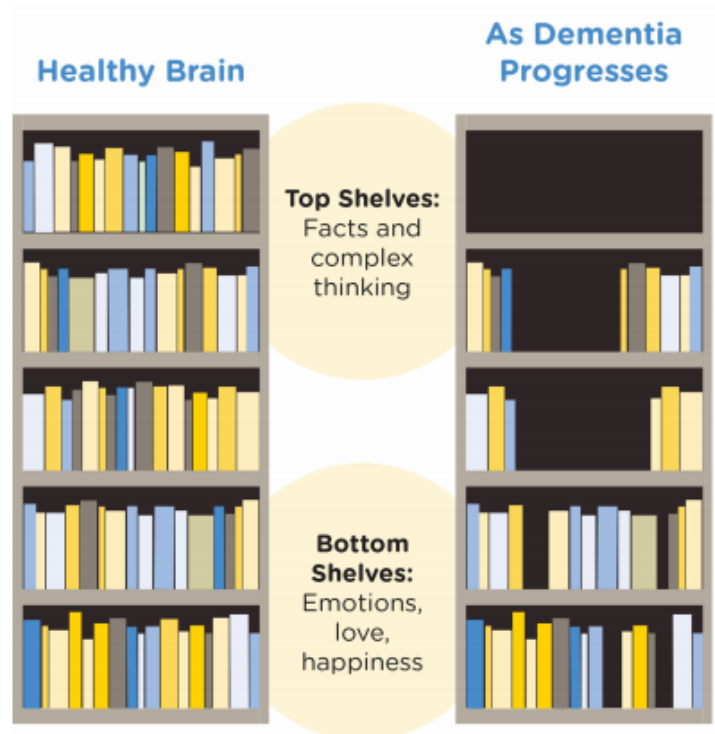
5. There’s more to the person than ...

e) ... 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.

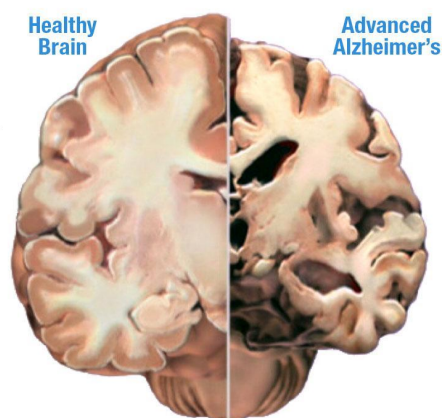


When dementia rocks the woman's bookcase, the books on the top shelf begin to fall out. The woman may not remember what she ate for breakfast, or that she has to pay for items at the drugstore or that someone came to visit this morning. Emotions and feelings are lower down within the bookcase just like 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.
- **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 shower 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.
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

### As a Dementia Friend, I will... (select at least one)

- Get in touch and staying in touch with someone I know living with dementia
- Support dementia friendly efforts in my community
- Start a dementia friendly effort in my community
- Volunteer for an organization that helps people with dementia
- Campaign for change, e.g. by participating in local advocacy events
- Encourage friends to become Dementia Friends
- Carry out a personal action e.g. being more patient when out in my community
- Volunteer to participate in a clinical trial
- Adopt 1 or more dementia friendly practices in my personal or professional life
- Ask my doctor for cognitive assessment during my annual physical exam
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

# Resources

## 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](http://www.alzheimers.gov))
- The **Alzheimer's Association** ([www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org))
- The **Dementia Road Map**, produced by the Washington State Dementia Action Collaborative, provides information and resources to help caregivers navigate their loved ones' dementia journey. Available in English or Spanish ([www.dshs.wa.gov](http://www.dshs.wa.gov)).

## Dementia, Caregiving and Transportation

- **DFA Sector Video on Transportation** ([www.dfamerica.org/sector-videos/](http://www.dfamerica.org/sector-videos/))
- **Dementia, Caregiving and Transportation Toolkit** - ([www.nadtc.org/wp-content/uploads/Dementia\\_Caregiving\\_and\\_Transportation.pdf](http://www.nadtc.org/wp-content/uploads/Dementia_Caregiving_and_Transportation.pdf))
- **Dementia, Caregiving and Transportation Webinar** - ([www.nadtc.org/resources-publications/resource/dementia-caregiving-transportation-webinar/](http://www.nadtc.org/resources-publications/resource/dementia-caregiving-transportation-webinar/))

## Learn More about Local Programs and Services

- **Kitsap County** ([www.kitsapgov.com/hs/Pages/Dementia-Support.aspx](http://www.kitsapgov.com/hs/Pages/Dementia-Support.aspx)).
- The **Alzheimer's Association Washington State Chapter** ([www.alzwa.org](http://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 offices in King County by calling 206-363-5500.
- **Community Living Connections / Area Agencies on Aging** ([www.communitylivingconnections.org](http://www.communitylivingconnections.org)) provide information and referrals to programs and services by county. Reach the local office in King County by calling 206-962-8467.
- The **Momentia Seattle** ([www.momentiasseattle.org](http://www.momentiasseattle.org)) online calendar lists community-based arts, social, fitness and volunteer programs for people with

memory loss and their families in the Puget Sound region, offered by a variety of organizations.

### Learn more about Dementia-Friendly Communities

A dementia-friendly community is a neighborhood, town or region in which people with dementia and their loved ones can fully participate and contribute. Everyone in the community has a basic level of dementia awareness and knows how to be supportive, and the places and services in the community— from libraries, to buses, to shops and hospitals - are set up to be welcoming and accessible to people with dementia and their families. To learn more and get involved, see the resources below.

- This **dementia-friendly communities fact sheet** for Washington State ([www.tinyurl.com/DementiaFriendlyWAIntro](http://www.tinyurl.com/DementiaFriendlyWAIntro)) provides information on what a dementia-friendly community looks like, and sample action steps you can take to promote dementia-friendliness where you live.
- The **Dementia Friendly America** website ([www.dfamerica.org](http://www.dfamerica.org)) provides a toolkit and other resources for building a dementia-friendly community.
- The **Dementia Friends** public awareness program can be a part of making your community more dementia-friendly. Learn more at [www.dementiafriendsusa.org](http://www.dementiafriendsusa.org)

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