



# Beyond Signs and Symptoms: What to Consider and How to Prepare

*Presented By:*

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# OBJECTIVES

Define and describe

Define and describe the signs and symptoms of Alzheimer's disease

Identify

Identify the causes and risk factors of Alzheimer's Disease

Describe

Describe the financial and emotional impact on a caregiver

Assess

What to consider when creating a care plan.

# DEMENTIA'S RIPPLE EFFECT

A close-up photograph of a single water droplet falling into a pool of water. The droplet is suspended in mid-air just above the surface, and it has just made contact, creating a series of concentric ripples that spread outwards. The water is a clear, light blue color, and the lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the ripples and the clarity of the droplet.

The impact of dementia can be extensive. This illness will impact a person's ability to communicate, care for themselves, relate to the external world, as well as impacting relationships with family, friends and community.



# NATIONAL AND WORLDWIDE STATISTICS

Over 47 million people worldwide have dementia

By 2050 this is expected to rise to 135 million

Over 6.2 million Americans ages 65+ have dementia

- 72% are 75+
- 3.8 million women
- 2.4 million men

# THE BENEFITS OF EARLY DETECTION IN ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE



**Take control of your life**

**An explanation for your symptoms**

**Start taking preventative measures**

**Access to the right services and supports**

**Access to available treatments**

**Provides time for those who will support to prepare**

# WHAT IS DEMENTIA?

- Dementia is a general term for a decline in mental ability that interferes with daily life.
- Most types cause a gradual worsening of symptoms over time.
- These neurodegenerative diseases lead to abnormal protein build ups in the brain.
- Impact can be seen in the following areas:
  - Memory
  - Judgement
  - Motor skills
  - Communication
  - Mood

# ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

**Alzheimer's disease is a brain disorder that impacts memory, thinking and language skills, and the ability to carry out the simplest tasks.**

Most common form of dementia

Chronic, progressive, degenerative disorder

Two types – young onset and late onset



**Normal Brain**



**Alzheimers Brain**



# MEMORY LOSS: WHY IT HAPPENS

**“Normal”  
Age Related**

**Mild  
Cognitive  
Impairment**

**Health  
Conditions**

**Dementia**

# CAUSES AND RISK FACTORS OF ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

There is no single cause of Alzheimer's Disease

Most individuals develop the Disease after the age of 65

- After 65 the risk double every 5 years

Family history can increase the risk, especially when more than 1 close relative has the disease

- Less than 1% of Alzheimer's cases are caused by deterministic genes

Other risk factors include:

- Head injury
- Head-heart connections

(2019 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures – Alzheimer's Association)

# THE IMPACT OF STRESSFUL EVENTS ON BRAIN HEALTH

Repeated stress has found to have an enormous impact on the brain  
Changes to the Amygdala, Hippocampus, Prefrontal Cortex

Stressful life experiences age the brain

- *Black Americans 4 years*
- *1.5 years white Americans*

Black Americans are two times more likely to develop Alzheimer's Disease

- *Hispanic and Latino/Latinx Americans 1.5xs more likely*

**It is imperative to think about Brain Health from BIRTH**

# ALZHEIMER'S WARNING SIGNS

1. Memory loss disrupting daily life
2. Confusion with time and place
3. Difficulty completing familiar tasks
4. Problem-solving and planning challenges
5. Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps
6. Language and writing challenges
7. Troubles comprehending visual images and spatial relationships
8. Poor judgement
9. Withdrawal from social activities
10. Changes in mood and personality



# ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE: PROGRESSION

## Early

- Problems with complex mental tasks
- Confusion or disorientation in familiar places
- Difficulty learning new tasks or remembering new people
- Mild language challenges

## Middle

- Disturbances in the sleep wake cycle
- Hallucinations and delusions
- Difficulty executing personal care independently

## Late

- Severe language and motor impairment
- Requiring complete assistance with personal care
- Widespread disconnect from the environment, people, and oneself



# MEDICATIONS

## Cognitive Enhancing Medications

- Delays cognitive symptoms

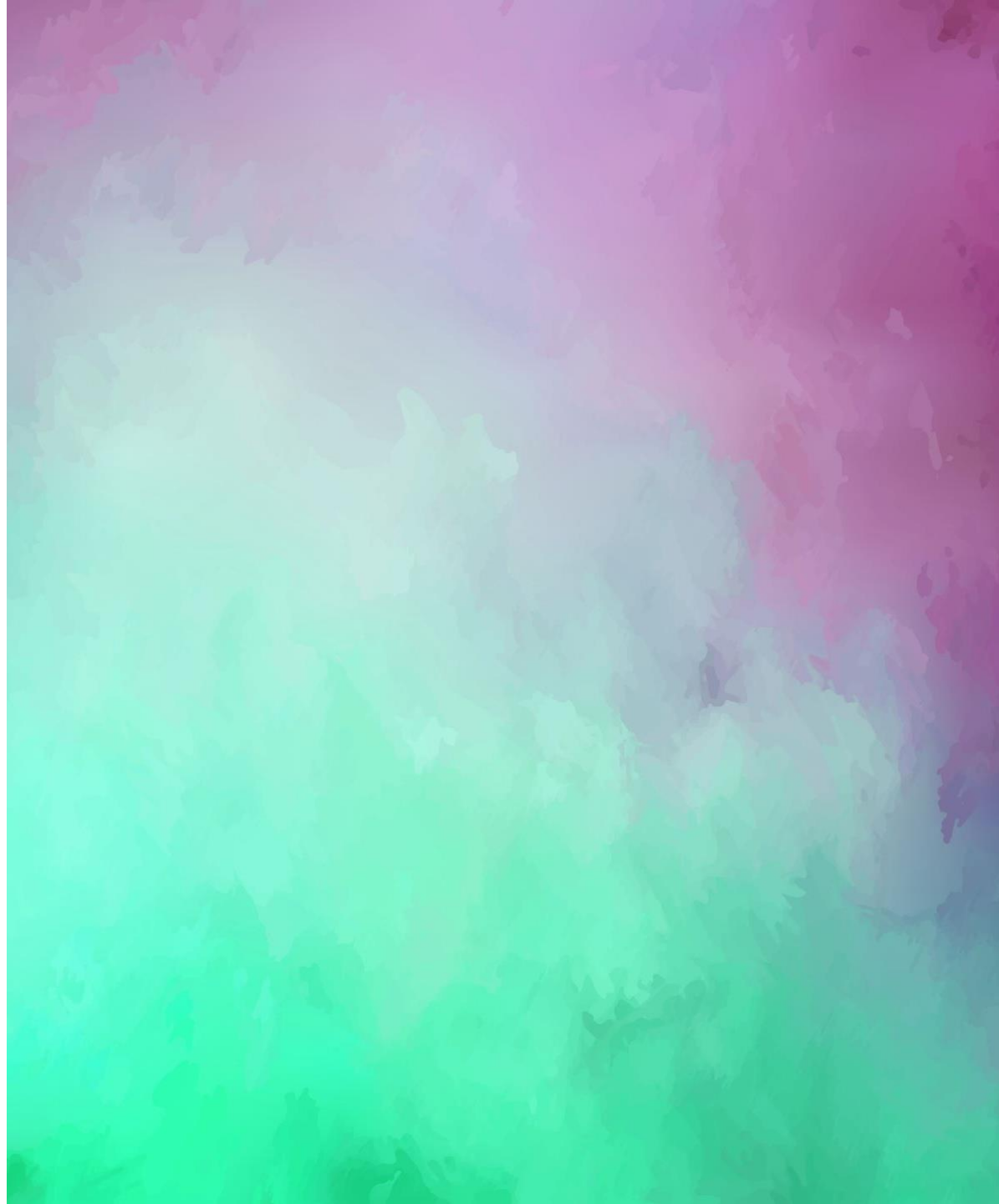
## Psychiatric Medications

- Addresses behavioral symptoms
- Not FDA approved for psychiatric dementia symptoms

New category of medication targets the fundamental pathophysiology of the disease.

**WHAT TO  
CONSIDER  
WHEN  
PROCESSING  
AND PLANNING**

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# ACKNOWLEDGE AND ADDRESS FEELINGS:

**Anger**

**Fear**

**Depression**

**Denial**

**Resentment**

**Loss**

**Relief**



# THE IMPACT OF CAREGIVING

The personality and behavior changes of the person with Alzheimer's can be the most challenging for caregivers

Although 45% of dementia caregivers feel what they do is rewarding – twice as many from non-dementia caregivers experience extreme emotional, financial, and physical challenges

41% provide caregiving alone

59% high to very high emotional stress

30-40% of family caregivers experience depression

- Depression worsens as cognitive impairment increases

44% of caregivers experience anxiety

During the late stages of Alzheimer's 59% of caregivers feel they are "on duty" 24 hours a day

- 72% reported a sense of relief after the passing of their loved one

(2021 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures – Alzheimer's Association)



## FIND SUPPORT

- Support Groups
- Individual Counseling
- Education
- Resources and Supports



## **Learn about the Disease:**

Progression

Stages of disease

Behaviors

Treatment Options

# **EDUCATE**



# BUILD A TEAM

Family and Friends

Medical professionals

Social workers, aging life care  
specialists

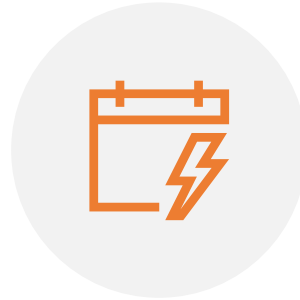
Elder law attorneys

Financial advisors

# ASSESSING THE PRESENT AND PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE



**SAFETY**



**DAY-TO-DAY  
TASKS**



**ACTIVITIES OF  
DAILY LIVING**



# STEPS TO HELP THE PERSON MAKE THEIR OWN DECISIONS

Choose the right time of day.

Find a quiet space to talk.

Ensure the person has their glasses, hearing aid, etc.

Decide whether you are the right person to facilitate the conversation.

Ex. Include someone of the same culture or religion, speaks their primary language, trusted friend.

Do your own research on the topic or situation.

Provide a simplistic explanation of the situation or dilemma.

Present 2-3 realistic options for the person to choose from.

Allow time for the person to think about it and talk with someone they trust.

Agree on a day and time to explore the outcome of the decision.



# PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

Legal

Financial

Advanced Care Planning



Adult Day Programs  
Community Programs  
Respite Care  
Home Care  
Senior Living

LEARN WHAT IS AVAILABLE



# IN SUMMARY:

Support

- Find support

Educate

- Education for everyone

Empower

- Empower by supporting personal choice

Know

- Know your options

Take

- Take stock of finances and legal planning

# THE PERSON BEHIND THE ILLNESS

Know each person  
within their unique  
context

A person is more than  
their diagnosis

Focus on strengths rather  
than dwelling on  
deficiencies

# IF YOU HAD DEMENTIA...

- ❖ What would you want from people who were caring for you?
- ❖ What would you not want from them?
- ❖ What would you want them to know most about you?
- ❖ What would be most important?



# HOME SAFETY CHECK

## GENERAL

- Make sure the numerals for your address are clearly visible from the street.
- Keep important phone numbers – including police, fire, poison control and emergency services near the telephone, and be sure to write in large, easy-to-read print.
- Water leaks can cause serious damage to your home and your health – identify the cause of any leak and fix it promptly.
- Have your gutters and downspouts checked once a year to ensure they are clean and free of obstructions.
- Set your water heater no hotter than 120 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Keep low coffee tables, magazine racks, footrests and plants out of walkways.
- Remove old throw rugs and install a non-slip pad.

## ELECTRICAL SAFETY

- Do not place cords where they can be a tripping hazard and never place cords under rugs or carpets.
- Do not drape cords over space heaters, radiators or other hot surfaces.
- If possible, avoid using extension cords.
- Use safety plugs to cover unused electrical outlets.
- Never overload outlets, extension cords or power strips.
- Install ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) electrical receptacles in kitchen and bathrooms.

## FIRE SAFETY

- Have a plan for escape in case of a home fire that all occupants understand, making special considerations for small children and older home occupants.
- Have an ABC-rated fire extinguisher on every floor of the house, especially in or near the kitchen.
- Be sure that everyone in the house knows how to properly operate fire extinguishers.
- Have your furnace checked once a year.
- Have your chimney and flue inspected once a year.
- Never leave a space heater, halogen lamp or open flame unattended. Do not keep any of these items close to curtains or other flammable materials.
- Make sure that all lamps and fixtures are equipped with bulbs having wattage equal to or less than the manufacturer's suggestion.

## SMOKE AND CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS

- Have an operating smoke and/or carbon monoxide detector on each floor of your home.
- Check batteries twice a year (when daylight savings time changes) and replace as needed.
- If anyone in your home is hearing impaired, be sure that the smoke detectors in your home alert using lights or vibrations, as well as sound.

## KITCHEN

- Be sure to have sturdy step stools and ladders on hand. Do not use a chair to reach high surfaces of your home.
- Store flammable items away from your stovetop or range:
  - Do not place rags or towels on the oven handle.
  - Store plastic utensils and pot holders away from hot surfaces.
- Do not wear loose fitting clothing while cooking.
- Turn pot handles away from the front of the stove.
- Unplug all portable and countertop appliances that are not in use.
- Make sure that the kitchen is well-lit.
- Clean all spills immediately to avoid slips and the spread of bacteria.
- Separate cleaning products and other chemicals from food and drinks.
- Keep anything poisonous secure and out of reach of children.
- Use the exhaust fan when cooking to avoid moisture build up.

## HALLS AND ENTRYWAYS

- Make sure that all windows and doors to the outside close and lock securely.
- Keep keys to internal door locks close to the door and easily accessible.
- Keep hallways clear for easy passage in case of an emergency.
- Place locks where all members of the household can reach and use them.
- Be sure that any walkways to the house are free of tripping hazards.
- Widen doorways to accommodate household members who use a walker or wheelchair.

## STAIRS

- Stairs should be well-lit with switches at both the top and bottom of a stairway.
- Do not store anything on the steps – even temporarily.
- Do not place loose area rugs at the top or bottom of stairways.
- Install handrails on both sides of any stairway.

## BATHROOMS

- Keep electric devices away from bathtubs and sinks.
- Keep towels and washcloths away from heaters.
- Install grab bars in bathrooms and elsewhere as needed.
- Install and/or use the exhaust fan when bathing or showering to avoid moisture build up.
- Install a non-slip mat or textured adhesive strips on the floor of your shower or bathtub.
- Modify your toilets, sinks and bathtubs as needed to make them easier and safer to use.
- Keep first aid supplies well stocked and easily accessible.

## BEDROOMS

- Have a lamp or light switch with a dimmer feature that you can easily reach from bed.
- Keep hot plates, space heaters and other hot appliances away from bed.
- Keep a phone near the bed.
- Never place anything on top of a plugged-in electric blanket.
- Place nightlights in bedrooms and hallways to guide you in the dark.

## BASEMENT/LAUNDRY ROOM

- Clean the clothes dryers' lint trap after each use.
- Make sure you never run the dryer when no one is home.
- Do not leave clutter on the floor – it is both a fire and a tripping hazard.
- Make sure the dryer vents outside with metal duct and unobstructed air flow.
- Make sure water heaters, furnaces and space heaters that produce carbon monoxide vent outside.



QUESTIONS?

# AFA RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

AFA's National Toll-free Helpline – **7 DAYS A WEEK 12 HOURS A DAY!**

Our TEAL ROOM! – Virtual and In-Person Therapeutic Programs and Activities

Professional Trainings offering Continuing Education credits!

AFA's Educating America Tour

National Memory Screening Program – Now Virtual!

Excellence in Care Dementia Care Program of Distinction

Care Connection monthly webinar

Support Groups

Alzheimer's TODAY Magazine

[www.alzfdn.org](http://www.alzfdn.org)

**866-232-8484**

THANK YOU!!!

Additional Questions?

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