

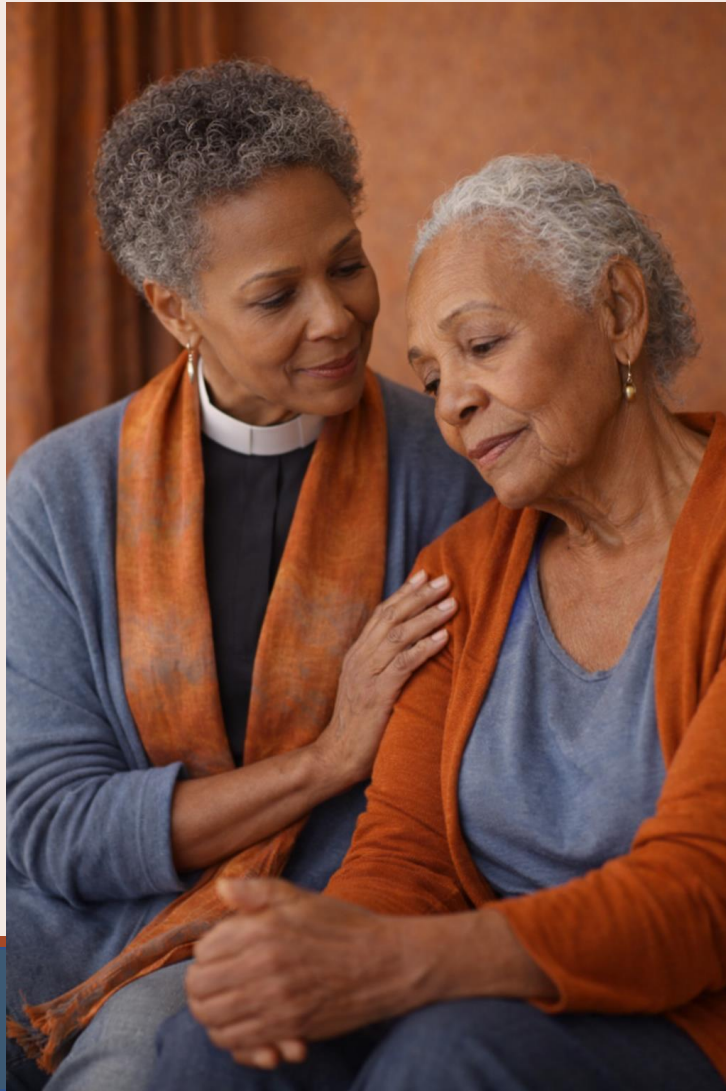


Virginia Partners in Brain Health & Dementia Support

Heather Kidd
Dementia Services Specialist



Overview



- **Understanding Dementia**
- **Improving Brain Health and Reducing Risk**
- **Exploring Dementia Friendly Opportunities**
- **Partnering Together**

Understanding Dementia



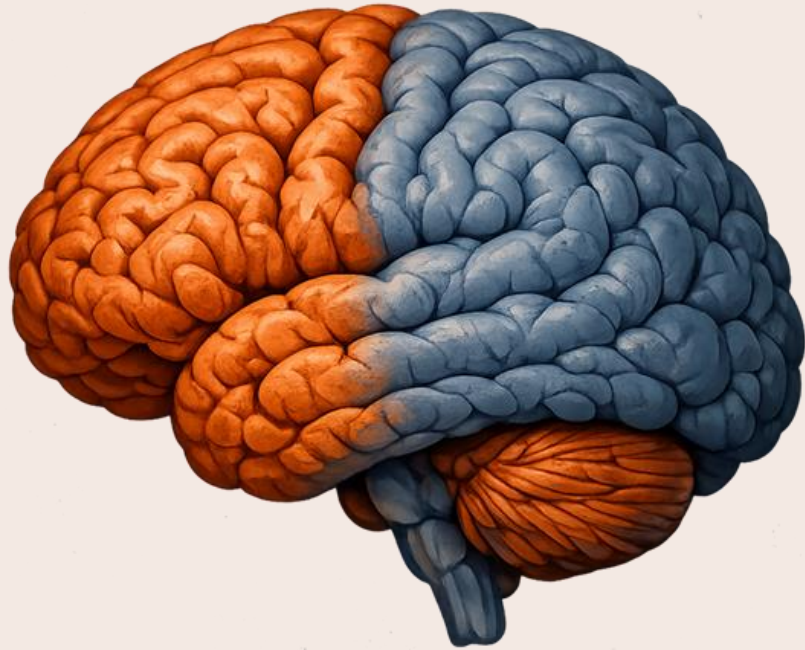
Dementia Definition

Dementia is a broad, umbrella term for cognitive changes in memory, thinking, judgment, or personality that are severe enough to interfere with daily life.

Different Types of Dementia

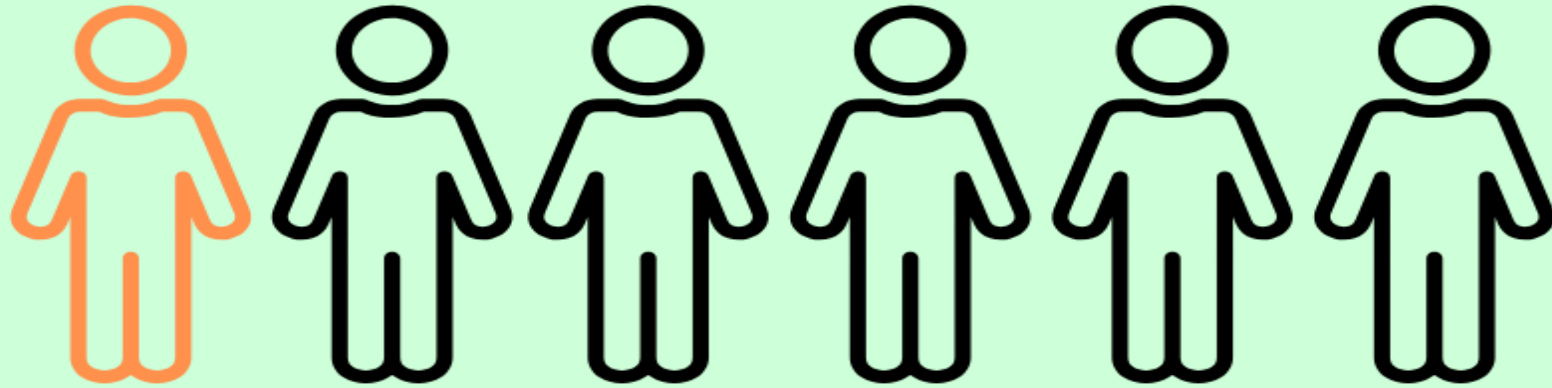
DISEASE	% of all dementias
Alzheimer's Disease	60-80%
Vascular Dementia	15-20%
Dementia with Lewy Bodies	5%
Parkinson's disease dementia	4%
Frontotemporal Degeneration	
Behavior Variant	1%
Primary Progressive Aphasia	1%

Improving Brain Health & Reducing Risk



- Dementia is not a normal part of the aging process.
- Science shows we can reduce risk and support brain health.
- Some brain changes are treatable.
- Early detection matters.

1 IN 6 VIRGINIANS OVER 45 EXPERIENCE THINKING OR MEMORY PROBLEMS



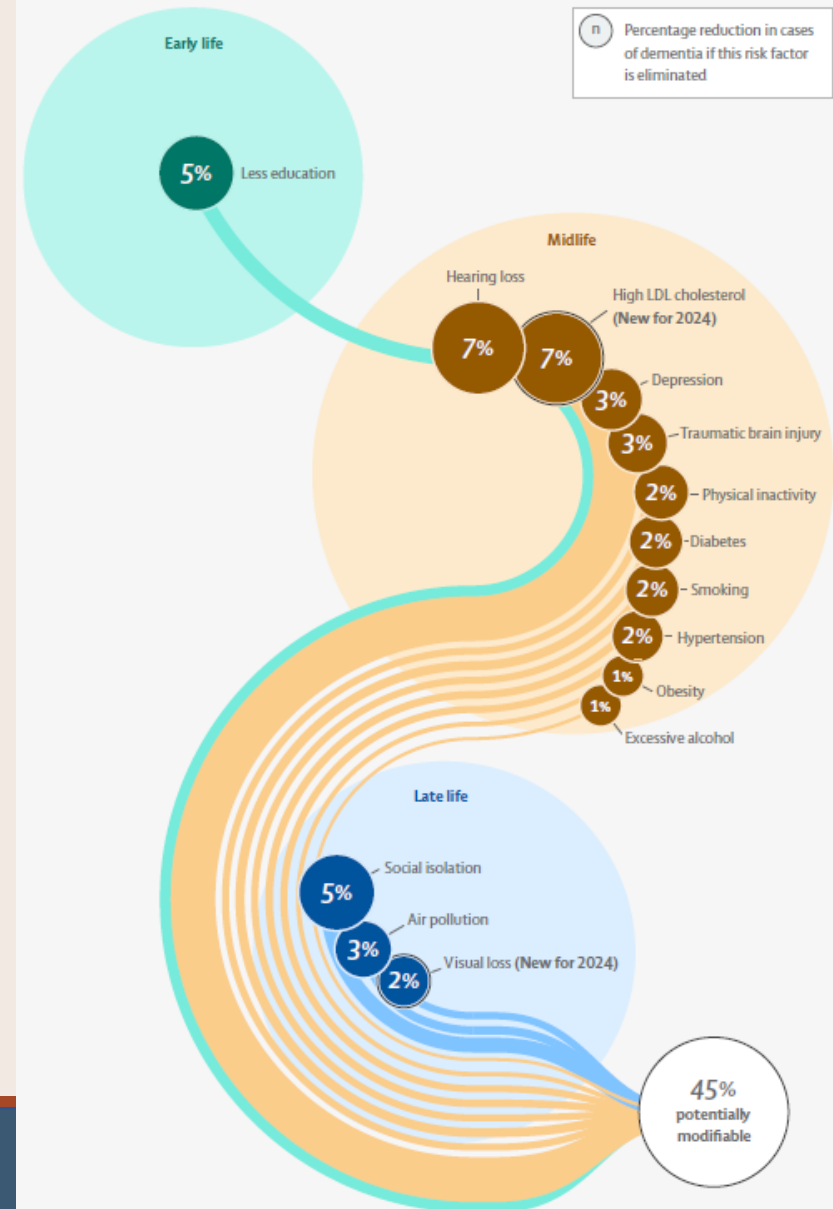
These changes can have many causes —
some are treatable.
It's always a good idea to check in with your
health care provider.

Why is brain health important?

A life-course model showing that addressing 14 potentially modifiable risk factors could prevent up to 45% of worldwide dementias

Risk factors for dementia — 2024 update

The 2024 update to the standing Lancet Commission on dementia prevention, intervention, and care adds two new risk factors (high LDL cholesterol and vision loss) and indicates that nearly half of all dementia cases worldwide could be prevented or delayed by addressing 14 modifiable risk factors.



Brain Health Checklist

- ✓ Manage blood pressure, cholesterol, diabetes.
- ✓ Eat a brain-healthy diet.
- ✓ Move your body daily.
- ✓ Get good sleep.
- ✓ Reduce stress.
- ✓ Stay socially active.
- ✓ Protect hearing and avoid head injuries.



Community Support



- Supporting community education
- Awareness of health disparities
- Supporting screening
- Importance of early detection
- Many treatable conditions

Exploring Dementia Friendly Opportunities



- Dementia Friendly Initiatives
- Dementia Friendly Communities
- Dementia Friends
- Dementia Friends Information Session

Why Dementia Friendly? Why Dementia Friends?

AWARENESS

STIGMA

Dementia Friendly Initiatives



A Member of the Dementia Friendly America Network



Dementia Friendly Communities



Dementia friendly communities foster the ability of people living with dementia to remain in community and engage and thrive in day to day living.

- A key component of dementia capability
- Led nationally by USAging
- AAAs often take a leading role or provide key support
- Statewide workshop in April 2018 to kick start Dementia Friendly Virginia
- LeadingAge Virginia and DARS leading the effort
- Can be one community, a county, a region

Dementia Friends



Since 2018:

- Over 11,000 Friends
- Over 750 Champions

- Dementia Friends Information Sessions



- Dementia Friends Champion training sessions



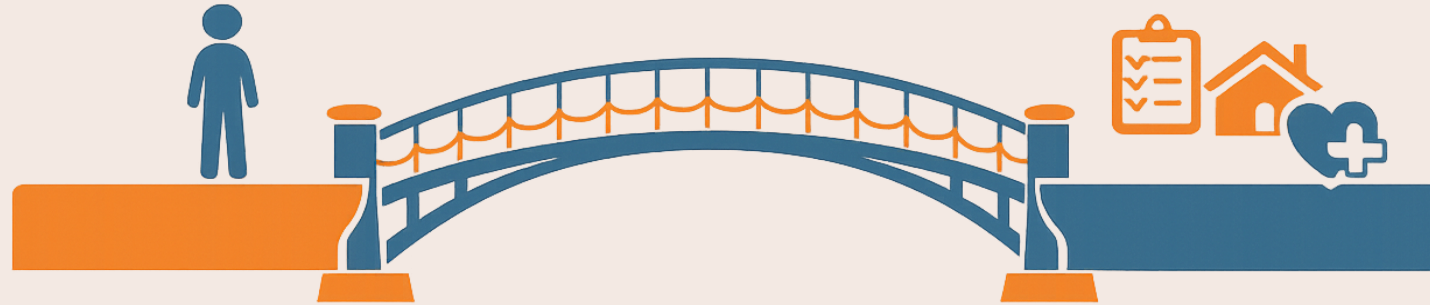
Dementia Friends 5 Key Messages



1. Dementia is not a normal part of aging.
2. Dementia is caused by diseases of the brain.
3. Dementia is not just about memory loss.
4. It is possible to live well with dementia.
5. There is more to the person than the dementia.

Partnering Together

to Bring Resources to Communities



- Dementia Capable Virginia
- Virginia's Dementia Roadmap
- Community Partners
- Dementia Friendly and Dementia Friends

Dementia Capable Virginia

[For Individuals & Families](#)

[For Providers](#)

[For Researchers & Participants](#)

[Home](#) > [Aging Services](#) > [Dementia Capable Virginia](#)

Dementia Capable Virginia provides resources and training materials for individuals, families, caregivers and providers.



**Dementia
Capable**
VIRGINIA



Dementia Road Map



Virginia Dementia Road Map: A Guide for People Impacted by Dementia

Virginia Dementia Road Map: A Guide for People Impacted by Dementia

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Virginia Dementia Road Map Overview



Wondering and Worried Page 7

- Is everything OK?
- Should I or my loved one be checked by a health care professional?
- Have I, or has my loved one, completed an annual wellness exam or cognitive evaluation?
- What if my loved one won't go to a health care professional?



Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI) Page 10

- Where do we go to get memory concerns checked out?
- How can I help my loved one with their memory and thinking?
- What can we do to promote our loved one's well-being?
- Can I share concerns privately with a health care professional?

Adapted with permission from the Dementia Action Collaborative's *Dementia Road Map: A Guide for Family and Care Partners*

Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Commission




Early-Stage Dementia Page 13

- Are there any medications, treatments or lifestyle changes that could help my, or my loved one's, memory and thinking?
- How can we help our loved one stay active and connected?
- Should I, or my loved one, still be driving?
- Is all our legal paperwork in order?

Mid-Stage Dementia Page 17

- What can I do to make the home safer?
- What can we do if our loved one won't stop driving?
- Where do we get help in coping with behaviors?
- What services might help and where do I find them?
- How can I make my loved one's life more enjoyable?

Late-Stage Dementia Page 21

- What can we do to promote quality of life?
- What kind of care is best for my loved one?
- What do we want in terms of medical care at the end of our loved one's life?



vda.virginia.gov/DementiaCapableVA.htm



easyaccess.virginia.gov



Scan For Online Version with Links

This publication is illustrated with details taken from artworks created by people living with dementia participating in the Opening Minds Through Art program. See page 38 for more information on this program.

Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Commission 3

Dementia Road Map

Wondering and Worried



“Caregiving isn’t just about the feeding, the changing of clothing, the medical appointments. It’s about the special time you have with them. The one on one. It may not be a word spoken. It might just be holding hands. Let them feel your presence and your love.”
—Janie S.

What should you expect in this stage?

You notice changes in your own or your loved one’s memory, and thinking, but they may or may not affect daily life activities. For example, you may notice:

- Difficulty performing more than one task at a time.
- Difficulty solving complex problems or making decisions.
- Forgetting recent events or conversations.
- Taking longer to perform more difficult mental activities such as using the computer.
- Your loved one is likely concerned but may not discuss it. Other friends and family may or may not see or notice any changes.

Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Disorders Commission

7

You may be wondering

- Is everything OK?
- Should I or my loved one be checked by a health care professional?
- Have I, or has my loved one, completed an annual cognitive evaluation?
- What if my loved one won’t go to a health care professional?

Wondering and Worried

What you can do:

But if you’re looking for a specialist, contact the Alzheimer’s Association to help identify providers in your area or check for a Memory Assessment Center on the Dementia Capable Virginia website: ada.virginia.gov/

- Learn about normal changes that may indicate a need to get a professional. See “Signs” on page 23.
- If you’re worried about sharing your concerns with a health care professional.
- Keep track of changes that you notice. If a change doesn’t bring it up, find a professional to discuss these changes with.
- Ask your loved one to help you. It’s important to know what may be caused by something reversible. Even if not, it can help you with.
- If your loved one is resistant to the help of trusted family members, encourage this.
- Call and ask your loved one to help you for the Medicare Annual Wellness Visit (Medicare) that includes a physical exam along with other screening tests. Ask your health care professional what you need to do next.
- If you don’t feel comfortable talking to your health care professional, ask your primary care professional for help.

8

Virginia De

ACTION STEPS

The following steps are important at this point:

- Obtain a medical assessment** to find out what may be causing the problems.
- Complete health care planning documents. You and your loved one should have:**
 - A Health Care Directive (also called a “living will” or “advance directive” regarding treatment preferences); and
 - A Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care, appointing a health care “agent.”
- Complete a General Durable Power of Attorney document.** In this document, you/your loved one appoints an “agent” to assist with financial and related matters.
- Complete an estate plan.** Your loved one’s estate plan may include legal documents such as a will or a trust that direct the disposition of their estate upon death.
- Have a family meeting** to discuss what’s happening and necessary next steps.

Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Disorders Commission

9

Dementia Road Map

Understanding Palliative Care and Hospice Services



"I watched her do it for so long, it's become part of my daily life. She did it for her dad, and I feel like I have to do it for her. Being at home, being around family, it has sustained her." -Michelle H.

When someone you love has dementia, it can be challenging to know how to support them as the disease progresses. Two important types of care, palliative care and hospice services, can make a big difference in their quality of life. Understanding these services can help you make the best choices for your loved one.

What is Palliative Care?

Palliative care focuses on improving the quality of life for people with serious illnesses like dementia. It helps manage symptoms, reduce stress, and provide emotional and spiritual support. This type of care can start at any stage of dementia, even early on, and can be given alongside other treatments.

Palliative care teams usually include doctors, nurses, social workers, and sometimes chaplains. They work together to treat symptoms like pain, trouble sleeping, anxiety, or difficulty eating. They also help families cope with the emotional toll of dementia.

For example, if your loved one is having trouble swallowing, the palliative care team might suggest foods that are easier to eat or help create a feeding plan. If they are feeling anxious or confused, the team might offer medicines or calming techniques to help them relax.

Palliative care can take place in different settings, such as at home, in a hospital, or in a care facility. The goal is to make your loved one feel as comfortable and supported as possible.



Understanding Palliative Care and Hospice Services

What is Hospice Care?

Hospice care is for people who are in the final stages of a terminal illness, including advanced dementia. This care is focused on comfort, not curing the disease. Hospice typically begins when a doctor believes the person has about six months or less to live.

Hospice teams also include doctors, nurses, social workers, chaplains, and volunteers. They provide physical, emotional, and spiritual support to both the person with dementia and their family. Services can include managing pain, preventing discomfort, and helping families make tough decisions.

For people with advanced dementia, hospice care might involve ensuring they are not in pain, helping with feeding and bathing, or simply sitting with them to provide companionship. The team can also guide families on how to communicate with their loved one as verbal skills decline.

Hospice care usually happens at home or in a hospice facility. It allows people with dementia to spend their final days in a peaceful, supportive environment, surrounded by loved ones.



Dementia Road Map

Caring for the Care Partner



“My daughters, they kept saying, ‘Mom, you need to get some help to come in to help you.’ And I was like, ‘I’m okay. I’m okay, right now.’ But last month, two... three weeks now, I did seek, help. And that gives me a chance to go out. Run errands and whatever. As a matter of fact, I went to a movie Saturday evening. It was awesome.”

—Rosie H.

Caring for yourself is one of the most important things you can do as a care provider for your loved one. When your needs are taken care of, your loved one will benefit too. You can do this by asking family members or friends to help out, taking time to do things you enjoy, using respite services such as adult day programs, or getting help from a home health care agency. Taking these actions may provide you with relief and can help prevent you from getting ill or depressed. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, many more services and supports are available virtually, such as virtual support groups, potentially giving you more options. Contact the agencies and referral sources on the next pages for more information.

Remember this affirmation on your journey: *I care for myself so that I can continue caring for my loved one. I am doing my best, that is enough.*

Resources

GENERAL ASSISTANCE AND REFERRALS

Virginia 2-1-1	211
Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services	800-552-3042
Alzheimer’s Association 24/7	800-272-3900
Helpline Alzheimer’s and related Dementias Education and Referral Center (ADEAR Center)...	800-438-4380
DARS Dementia Services	804-662-9154

VIRGINIA’S NETWORK OF AREA AGENCIES ON AGING

Agency Name/Website	Counties/Cities Served	Phone Number
Alexandria Division of Aging and Adult Services www.alexandriava.gov/Aging	Alexandria	703-746-5999
Appalachian Agency for Senior Citizens www.aasc.org/	Buchanan, Dickenson, Russell, Tazewell	276-964-4215 800-656-2272
Arlington Agency on Aging www.arlingtonva.us/Government/Departments/DHS/Aging-Disability/Area-Agency-Aging	Arlington	703-228-1700
Bay Aging bayaging.org/	Essex, Gloucester, King and Queen, King William, Lancaster, Mathews, Middlesex, Northumberland, Richmond (County), Westmoreland	804-758-2386
Central Virginia Alliance for Community Living (CVAAL) www.cvacl.org/	Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford, Campbell, Lynchburg	434-385-9070
Crater District Area Agency on Aging cdaaa.org/	Colonial Heights, Dinwiddie, Emporia, Greensville, Hopewell, Petersburg, Prince George, Surry, Sussex	804-732-7020
District Three Governmental Cooperative district-three.org/	Bland, Bristol, Carroll, Galaz, Grayson, Smyth, Washington, Wythe	276-783-8157 800-541-0933
Eastern Shore Area Agency on Aging/Community Action Agency www.esaaa-caa.net/	Accomack, Northampton	757-442-9652 800-452-5977
Encompass Community Supports www.encompasscommunitysupport.org/	Culpeper, Fauquier, Madison, Orange, Rappahannock	540-825-3100

Caregiver Guide

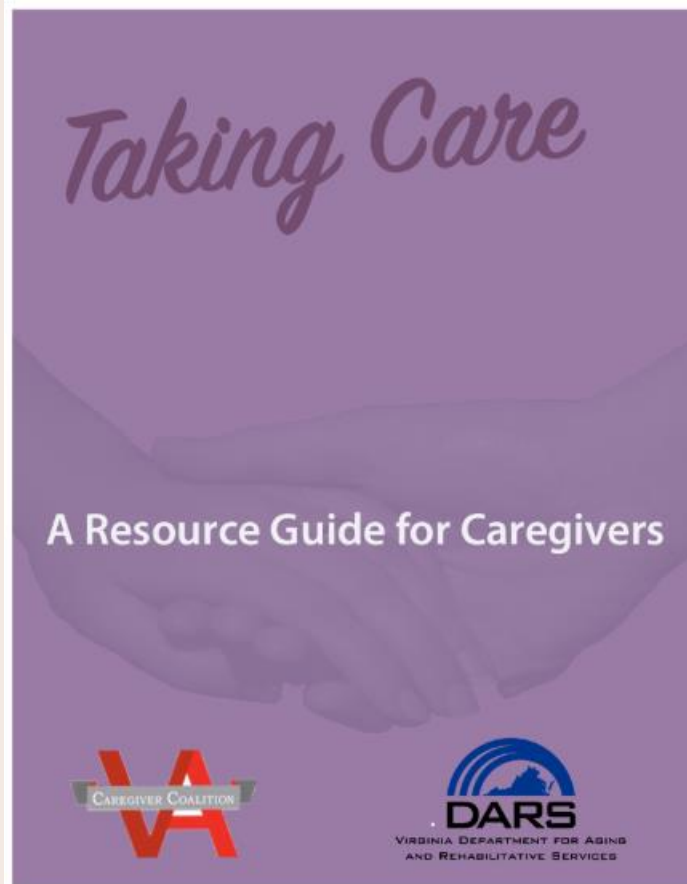


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Why ADL/IADL's Matter

TAKING CARE OF SOMEONE WITH DEMENTIA

- What is Dementia?
- Essential Resources
- Dementia Caregiving
- 10 Warning Signs of Alzheimer's
- The Stages of Dementia
- Dementia-Related Behaviors

Dementia Safety Information Toolkit



Safety Concerns for People Living with Dementia

Not all memory loss is due to dementia. Memory loss and/or confusion may be a result of many conditions, some of which are reversible. If you or someone you know has memory loss or confusion that's getting worse, it's important to talk with a health care professional about it. If it does turn out to be dementia, there are steps you can take to live well, and plan for a future with it.

Dementia affects each person differently, but symptoms typically include increasing memory loss, confusion, and disorientation. Changes in the brain can also impact how individuals interpret what they see, hear, feel, taste or smell, and their sense of time, place and judgment – each of which can impact safety.

The best environment for a person living with memory loss or dementia is one that helps them feel as independent and supported as possible. For people living with dementia wanting to stay at home, it's key to find the right balance between independence and safety – and to anticipate changes. With creativity and flexibility, it's possible to make adaptations that make the home safer and less stressful for all.



This "Info Kit" is a resource for family members and caregivers to assist in evaluating the home and taking steps to promote safety over the course of dementia. Materials highlight information and tips related to the following:

1. Home Safety
2. Falls Prevention
3. Driving
4. Wandering
5. Emergency Preparedness
6. Elder Abuse & Financial Exploitation

You may click on the links provided below each resource to view or print the information yourself. When a computer icon appears, the information is intended to be viewed online, and not in a printable format.

IT'S HELPFUL TO PLAN AHEAD: PUT SAFETY MEASURES IN PLACE BEFORE THEY'RE REALLY NEEDED

Adapted with permission from the Washington State Dementia Action Collaborative 8/2021

Information for families on keeping people living with dementia safe including:

- Home safety
- Falls prevention
- Driving
- Wandering
- Emergency preparedness
- Elder abuse and financial exploitation

Fact Sheets in six languages

Worried About Your Thinking or Memory?

Talking about changes in memory or thinking can be hard, but it's important to share your concerns with your doctor.

If you're worried about forgetfulness, feel it's getting worse or that the memory problems are starting to interfere with everyday life, it's time to talk to a healthcare professional.

4 Reasons to Get Checked Out!

- 1 Find out what may be causing the problems—there are reasons for memory loss and confusion that are treatable. Some conditions that cause dementia symptoms are treatable or reversible.
- 2 A health care professional can provide better clinical care for all your medical conditions with a diagnosis, when they understand what is happening.
- 3 You, your loved one and other family members can more easily plan for the future when you know what you are dealing with. A diagnosis makes taking the next steps a bit easier.
- 4 If you're worried about changes in yourself, consider sharing your concerns with family, friends or your health care professional.

Things you can do:

- Keep track of changes you notice. If your loved one doesn't bring it up, find the right time and a sensitive way to discuss these changes with them—get it out in the open.
- Call and ask your loved one's health care professional for the Medicare Annual Wellness exam. Feel free to share with the professional what you've noticed in person or in a letter.
- If you don't feel comfortable with your loved one's current health care professional, try to find a new one. Many primary care professionals can diagnose dementia.

For information on resources in your area, contact your local Area Agency on Aging or the Alzheimer's Association.

To find your Area Agency on Aging, call 1-800-552-3402
Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline: 1-800-272-3900



The information on this tip sheet is taken from Virginia Dementia Road Map: A Guide for People Impacted by Dementia. Download your copy of the Road Map by scanning the QR code or visit: vda.virginia.gov/DementiaCapableVA.htm

VDH VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
Dementia Capable
DARS VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ASSISTANCE SERVICES

Tips for Communicating with Persons Living with Dementia

What You Should Expect

Brain changes due to dementia can make it hard to communicate. The person living with dementia may have trouble saying what they want and understanding what others are saying. Your loved one may not be able to find the right words or may invent new words. They may repeat the same question over and over. Sometimes it may be hard to make sense of what your loved one is saying, and they may have trouble understanding your words. This can be frustrating for both of you and make communication even more difficult.

What You Can Do

- **Be present.** Let your loved one know you're listening and trying to understand. Keep your voice gentle. Hold the person's hand while you talk. Smile, nod, make appropriate eye contact.
- **Show respect.** Offer your loved one undivided attention, don't multi-task. Include your loved one in conversations, don't talk about them as if they weren't there.
- **Avoid distractions.** Background noise, like TVs or radios can compete for attention.
- **Position yourself.** Be close enough to be heard and seen clearly. Sit or stand at the same level, rather than standing over them.
- **Offer comfort.** If a person with dementia is having trouble communicating, let them know it's OK. Offer hugs, or hold hands as appropriate.
- **Use visual cues.** Gestures or other visual cues can help promote better understanding than words alone. Rather than asking if your loved one needs to use the toilet, walk them to the toilet and point to it. Demonstrate a task first.
- **Get hearing checked regularly.** If the person uses a hearing aid, check that it is working and inserted properly. When speaking, turn your face towards them and make sure your face is in the light so they can easily see your lip movements.
- **Keep it simple.** Use short sentences. Ask one question or offer one instruction at a time. It usually helps to use "positives"—say "Let's go here" instead of "Don't go there." As the disease progresses, ask questions that require a yes or no answer.
- **Allow time and be patient.** Slow pace of speech slightly and allow time for the person to process and respond. Try to avoid interrupting. If you're feeling rushed or stressed, take some time to calm down.
- **Focus on feelings.** Listen for the meaning behind the words. Their tone or body language may provide clues. Respond to the emotions.

Remember that these tips are offered as suggestions, and we encourage you to forgive yourself when things don't go as well as you want them to. It can be helpful to talk with others in the same situation to get more ideas and support. For information on support groups or other resources in your area, contact your local Area Agency on Aging or the Alzheimer's Association.

To find your Area Agency on Aging, call 1-800-552-3402
Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline: 1-800-272-3900



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VDH VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
Dementia Capable
DARS VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF ASSISTANCE SERVICES

6 Healthy Brain Habits

- 1 **Be Social**
Keep in touch with friends and family don't let yourself get self-isolated.
- 2 **Engage Your Brain**
Find ways to stimulate your thinking and explore new interests and hobbies.
- 3 **Manage Stress**
Practice relaxation, and maintain a daily schedule.
- 4 **Ongoing Exercise**
Move throughout the day aim to reach 2 and a half hours of moderate physical activity a week.
- 5 **Restorative Sleep**
Get 7 to 8 hours of restful sleep every day.
- 6 **Eat Right**
Choose a nutritious heart healthy diet including fish veggies fruits.

For information on resources in your area, contact your local Area Agency on Aging or the Alzheimer's Association.

To find your Area Agency on Aging, call 1-800-552-3402
Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline: 1-800-272-3900

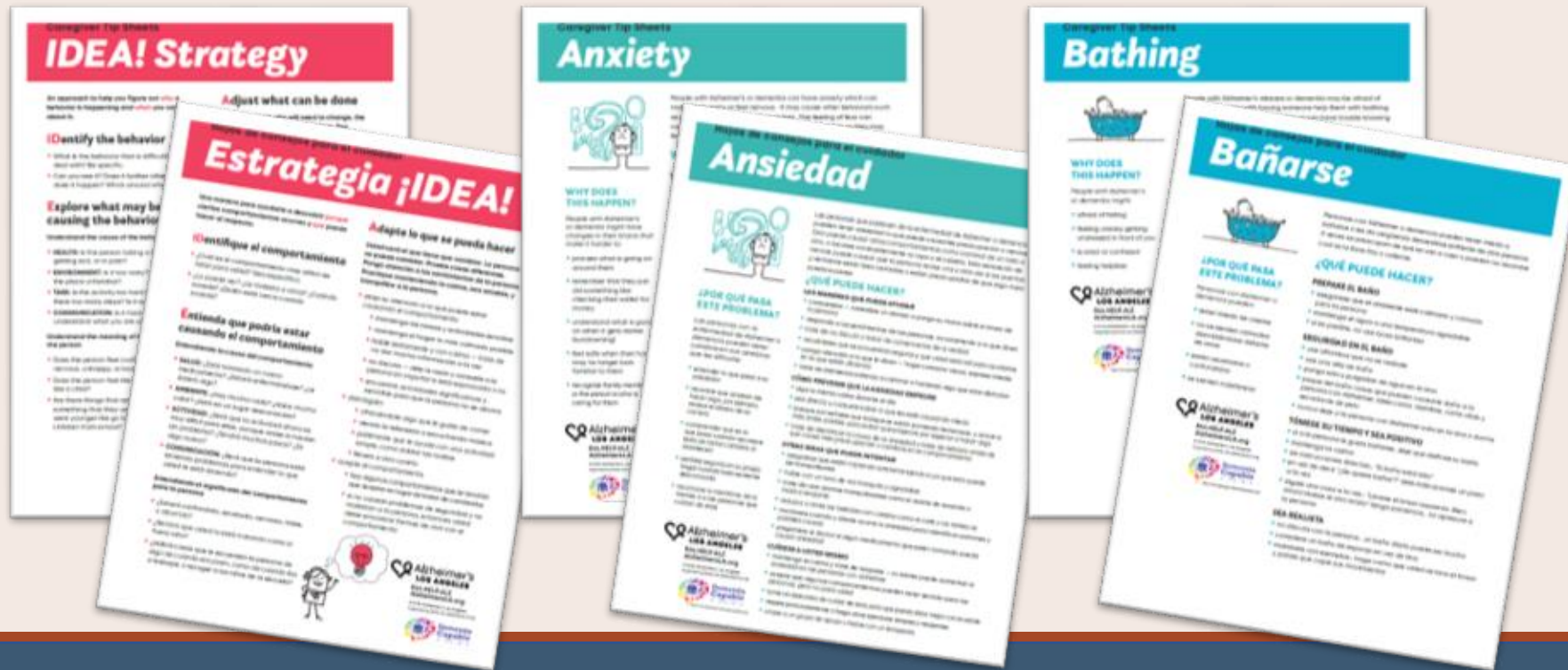


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VDH VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
healthybrain4.com

Caregiver Tip Sheets

- Addressing specific challenges for people living with dementia and caregivers



Advance Planning Guides

**Living with Dementia:
Planning for Your Health Care**

**Living with Dementia:
Planning for Your Care**

**Living with Dementia:
Financial Planning**

**Supporting Someone Living with
Dementia in Making Decisions**

Partners & Collaboration



In both dementia and brain health initiatives



Social Respite Webinar



Virginia's Social Respite Programs

- Provide meaningful activities and social connection for people living with dementia
- Offer caregivers and volunteers a needed break
- Reduce isolation for those who do not yet need full adult day services

Date: March 24 at 1 pm

Hosted by: Virginia Governor's Conference on Aging

Presented by: DARS

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_UedC3qAaSs-hoYq86r5iUw#/



Contact Details



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<https://dars.virginia.gov/aging/dementia-capable-virginia>