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- Over 3 million
- More than 6 million
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- About 11 million
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About how many Americans provide unpaid care for people living with Alzheimer’s or other dementias?

- About 8 million
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- Over 14 million
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Know the facts
Know the facts

Alzheimer’s and Dementia
Hear from the expert

Heather Snyder, Ph.D.
Alzheimer's Association
Alzheimer’s and Dementia Recap

- Dementia is a general term for a collection of symptoms that are severe enough to interfere with daily life.
- Alzheimer's is the most common cause of dementia.
- Alzheimer’s is not a normal part of aging; it is a progressive brain disease.

Alzheimer’s in the Brain
Dr. Maria Carrillo
Alzheimer's Association
## Know the 10 Warning Signs

1. Memory changes that disrupt daily life
2. Challenges in planning or solving problems
3. Difficulty completing familiar tasks
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

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**Effective Communication Strategies**
Learning Objectives:

- Explain the communication changes that take place throughout the course of the disease.
- Decode the verbal and behavioral messages delivered by someone living with dementia and respond in ways that are helpful to the person.
- Identify strategies to connect and communicate at each stage of the disease.

What is Communication?

- Connecting with others
- Sense of Self
- Sending messages
- BODY LANGUAGE
- Attitude
- Tone of voice
- Self-expression
- Receiving messages
- Communication
- Making decisions
- Relationships
- Interaction
- Body language
- Listening
- Words
- Facial expressions
Communication Changes Throughout the Disease

Early stage (Mild)
Convey thoughts and feelings through language.
Able to make decisions about future care.
May misinterpret what others say.

Middle stage (Moderate)
Use basic words and sentences.
Rely more on tone of voice, facial expression & body language.
Continue to need emotional connection & meaningful activity.

Late stage (Severe)
May still respond to familiar words, phrases or songs.
Use body language and the five senses to connect.

Communication in the Early Stage

Changes you may notice:

- Difficulty finding the right words.
- Taking longer to speak or respond.
- Withdrawing from conversations.
- Struggling with decision-making or problem-solving.
Communication in the Early Stage

To connect:

- Ask directly how to help with communication.
- Keep sentences clear and straightforward.
- Leave plenty of time for conversations.
- Include the person in conversations that affect him or her, including planning for the future.

Communication in the Middle Stage

Changes you may notice:

- Increased difficulty finding the right words.
- Using familiar words repeatedly.
- Inventing new words to describe familiar things.
- Easily losing train of thought.
- Speaking less frequently.
- Communicating through behavior rather than words more often.

**Consult a doctor when you notice major or sudden changes**
Communication in the Middle Stage

To connect, approach the person gently

- Approach from the front, say who you are and call the person by name.
- Maintain eye contact and get at eye level if seated or reclining.
- Avoid criticizing, correcting and arguing.
- Pay attention to your tone.
- Take your time.

Communication in the Middle Stage

To connect, join the person’s reality
Keep respect and empathy in your mind, then:

- Assess the person’s needs.
- Let the person know you hear his or her `concerns, whether they are expressed through words, behavior or both.
- Provide a brief answer.
- Respond to the emotions behind the statement.
Communication in the Middle Stage

To connect, keep it slow and basic

- Use short sentences and basic words.
- Speak slowly and clearly, one person and one question at a time.
- Limit distractions.
- Be patient.
- Offer a guess or fill in words if acceptable.

Communication in the Middle Stage

To connect, give multiple cues

- Provide visual cues and gestures.
- Avoid sudden movement.
- Write things down for the person.
- Put answers into your questions.
- Repeat as needed.
- Turn negatives into positives.
- Avoid quizzing.
Communication in the Middle Stage

To connect, respond empathically and reassure

- Join the person’s reality.
- Provide reassurance that you hear and understand.
- Focus on the feelings, not the facts.
- Validate and redirect the person if necessary.

Communication in the Late Stage

Changes you may notice:
- Communication is reduced to a few words or sounds.
- Possible responses to familiar words or phrases.

To connect:
- Listen for expressions of pain and respond promptly.
- Help the person feel safe and happy.
- Continue to bring respect to each conversation.
- Keep talking.
- Use all five senses to communicate.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sight</th>
<th>Sound</th>
<th>Touch</th>
<th>Smell</th>
<th>Taste</th>
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<tr>
<td>Brightly colored photos</td>
<td>Familiar music from their era</td>
<td>Gently play with the person’s hair</td>
<td>Bake!</td>
<td>Favorite foods</td>
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<td>Famous paintings (Norman Rockwell, Van Gogh)</td>
<td>Recordings of nature, animals, cities, farms, etc</td>
<td>Give lotion hand massages or basic manicures</td>
<td>Herbs and spices</td>
<td>Home baked items</td>
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<td>Favorite settings (neighborhoods in the past, vacations)</td>
<td>Songs, speech, or hymns in the person’s native language</td>
<td>Feel different fabrics and textured items</td>
<td>Freshly cut grass, leaves, flowers</td>
<td>Ice creams, puddings, spoonfuls of syrup</td>
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<td>Scenes from the past (historic events, old cars)</td>
<td>Read books, poetry, scripture, or magazine articles to the person</td>
<td>Squeeze non-toxic clay or simple manipulatives</td>
<td>Teas, coffee beans</td>
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<td>YouTube videos of topics of interest</td>
<td>Hum calming tunes while providing care</td>
<td>Hold the person’s hand or stroke their arm or back</td>
<td>Shaving cream, pipe tobacco</td>
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<td>Children and cute animals</td>
<td>Let them hear the gentle sound of your voice</td>
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<td>Meaningful scents (a loved one’s perfume)</td>
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<td>Paint with watercolors</td>
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<td>Go outdoors</td>
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**Communication in All Stages of the Disease**

- Join the person’s reality to connect.
- Understand and accept what you can and cannot change.
- Remember that the person retains a sense of self despite the losses of the disease.
- Demonstrate respect and connect through feelings.
- Always treat the person as the adult he or she is.
- Try to decode the person’s communications.
- Recognize the effects of your mood and actions.
- Try to understand the source of reactions.
- Help meet the needs while soothing and calming the person.
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Alzheimer’s Association
Help is ALWAYS Available

ALL OF OUR SERVICES ARE FREE:

• Educational programs
• Advocacy
• Information and Referrals
• Care Consultations: Free Care Planning
• Support groups
• Safety services
• Respite funding
• Lending Library

Education Programs

• Free online e-learnings available at www.alz.org/education
  – 10 Warning Signs
  – Understanding Alzheimer’s and Dementia
  – Dementia Conversations
  – Effective Communication Strategies
  – Legal and Financial Planning
  – Understanding and Responding to Dementia-Related Behaviors
  – And more!
Ways to Join the Fight

Whether you can spare a few hours a week or make a more significant time commitment, consider volunteering with the Alzheimer’s Association. Numerous opportunities are available, including becoming a community educator or joining your local Walk Committee. alz.org/volunteer
Held annually in more than 600 communities, the Alzheimer's Association Walk to End Alzheimer's is the world's largest fundraiser to fight the disease. Register today to raise awareness and funds to benefit Alzheimer's care, support and research. alz.org/walk

Questions?

800.272.3900 | alz.org