

# The Unspoken Symptoms of Dementia:

## What They Are & How to Manage

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### What does the Giving Voice Foundation offer?



**Purposeful Planning Program**

- ▶ Free consultations with a local social worker who specializes in dementia & aging

**FREE creative outlets for individuals with dementia &/or their care partners**

- ▶ Creative Connections
- ▶ Brains in Bloom
- ▶ Dancing to Remember
- ▶ Music in Motion
- ▶ Caring for the Caregiver

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### Learning Objectives

1. Identify at least three behavioral and/or psychological symptoms of dementia.
2. Describe at least three nonpharmacological interventions for management of behavioral disturbances.
3. Distinguish the difference between Alzheimer's disease, dementia, and "normal aging."



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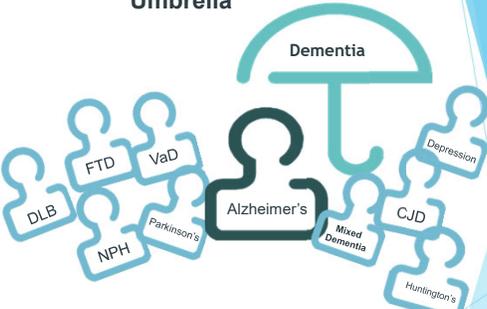
### What is Dementia?

- ▶ The loss of intellectual functions interfering with daily functioning
  - Thinking
  - Remembering
  - Reasoning
- ▶ It's a group of symptoms potentially causing fatality




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### Conditions Under the Dementia Umbrella



The cause and rate of progression of dementias vary



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### Dementia vs. Normal Aging

ABILITY	NORMAL AGING	DEMENTIA
<b>Short-term memory &amp; learning new info</b>	Sometimes forgetting people's names or appts, but remembering them later	Forgetting the names of close friends or family, or forgetting recent events (for example, visitors you had that day)
	Occasionally forgetting something you were told	Asking for the same information over and over (for example, "where are my keys?")
	Misplacing things from time to time - for example, your mobile phone, glasses or the TV remote - but retracing steps to find them	Putting objects in unusual places - for example, putting your house keys in the bathroom cabinet

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### Dementia vs. Normal Aging

ABILITY	NORMAL AGING	DEMENTIA
Planning, problem-solving and decision-making	Being a bit slower to react or think things through	Getting very confused when planning or thinking things through
	Getting less able to juggle multiple tasks, especially when distracted	Having a lot of difficulty concentrating
	Making a bad decision once in a while	Frequently poor judgement when dealing with money or when assessing risks

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### Dementia vs. Normal Aging

ABILITY	NORMAL AGING	DEMENTIA
Language	Having a bit of trouble finding the right word sometimes	Having frequent problems finding the right word or frequently referring to objects as 'that thing'
	Needing to concentrate harder to keep up with a conversation	Having trouble following or joining a conversation
	Losing the thread if distracted or many people speaking at once	Regularly losing the thread of what someone is saying

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### Alzheimer's destroys brain cells

- There are 100 billion nerve cells, or neurons, creating a branching network.
- Signals traveling through the neuron forest form memories, thoughts and feelings.
- Alzheimer's destroys neurons.




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### Course of the Disease

- ▶ 3 - 20 years from the onset of symptoms
- ▶ Average survival time is 9-10 years from diagnosis
- ▶ Stages vary and overlap
- ▶ No identified cause or cure at present



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### What Is Alzheimers disease?



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### More Commonly Talked About *Cognitive* Symptoms

- ▶ Repetition
- ▶ Short-term memory loss
- ▶ Word-finding troubles
- ▶ Perceptual changes
- ▶ Denial or lack of insight regarding diagnosis



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### Behavioral & Psychological Symptoms of Dementia (BPSD)

- ▶ **Depression** - “she cries a lot...says she wishes she were dead”
- ▶ **Agitation** - yelling, extreme restlessness
- ▶ **Aggression** - punching, kicking, biting
- ▶ **Resistance** - adamant refusals
- ▶ **Psychosis** - hallucinations, paranoia, suspiciousness
- ▶ **Disinhibition** - inappropriate language, grabbing
- ▶ **Sleep disturbances** - up all night, sleeps during day “sundowning”
- ▶ **Apathy** - “she doesn’t want to do anything”



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### Possible reasons and/or triggers for BPSD:

- ▶ Stage of dementia
- ▶ Type of dementia
  - ▶ FTD, Lewy Body, etc
- ▶ Somatic symptoms
  - ▶ UTI, irritable bowel, pain
- ▶ Sensory deficits
  - ▶ Impaired vision, hearing loss
- ▶ Environment
  - ▶ Overstimulating restaurant or large family gathering, boredom, dimly lit home, etc.



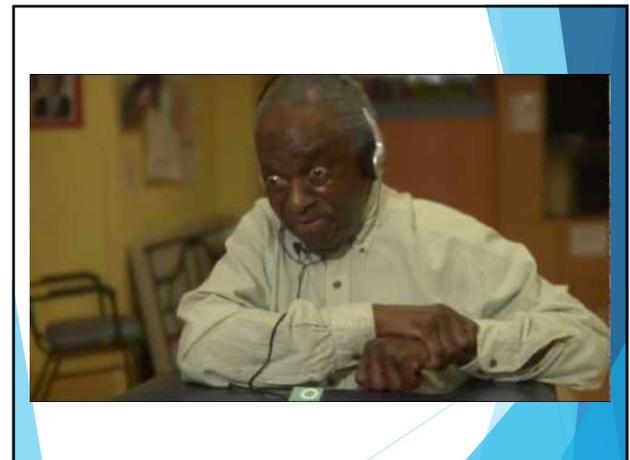
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### Non-pharmacological interventions:

- ▶ **Sensory stimulation interventions**  
(Acupuncture, aromatherapy, massage, light therapy, music, singing, dancing)
- ▶ **Cognitive / emotion-oriented interventions:**  
(Reminiscing, validation, simulated presence)
- ▶ **Behavioral management / effective communication techniques**
- ▶ **Other:** exercise, pet therapy, respite



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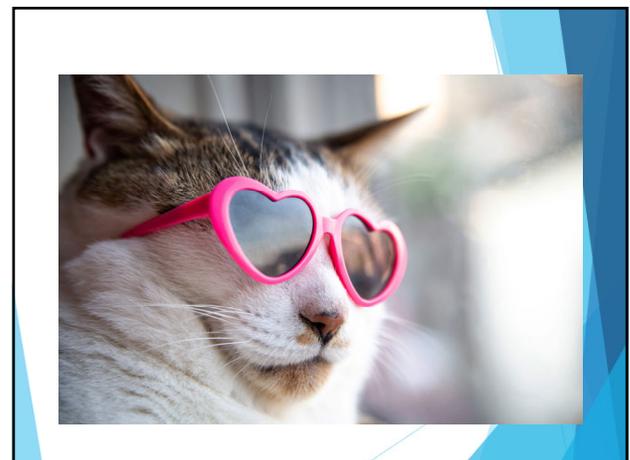
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Red arrows point from the text to the 'Behavioral management / effective communication techniques' section.

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## THREE R's

- R - RIGHT**  
They are always right.
- R - REASSURE**  
Focus on feelings not the facts.
- R - REDIRECT**  
Distract



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## Behavioral Management & Effective Communication Techniques

- ▶ Therapeutic Fibbing
- ▶ Focus on FEELINGS not FACTS
- ▶ Keep things simple & consistent
- ▶ Be aware of body language & tone of voice
- ▶ Avoid arguing, quizzing, or correcting



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## Consequences of BPSD are devastating:

- ▶ Stressful for patient and caregiver
  - ▶ Major reason for institutionalization
  - ▶ Major reason for caregiver decompensation
- ▶ Costly for society



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Questions?

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