

Adult Day Self-Care Newsletter

January 2023

Understanding Dementia

Many Adult Day Centers in New Jersey provide supervision, support, and care to older adults. Some of the participants in these programs have been diagnosed with a form of dementia, while others may show signs of memory loss or cognitive problems even if they haven't been diagnosed. Adult Day Center staff need to have basic competencies to effectively serve this population, yet there is no consensus on a competency list. In 2016, the state of [Georgia](#) identified understanding dementia as one of these key competencies. In 2021, [Illinois](#) agreed. Many other states, as well as the federal government, emphasize the importance of dementia capable competencies for all professional staff providing care for people with dementia, including front line direct care staff. One common area for important provider knowledge is being able to describe the types and stages of dementia. At COPSA, we believe that knowledge of dementia can help professional and family caregivers develop a compassionate and respectful perspective by recognizing that the challenging behaviors that come with memory loss and cognitive decline are most often the result of the disease. Once caregivers can appreciate this, they can adopt a practical problem-solving orientation, avoiding emotional reactions.

What's the Latest in Dementia Care?

This is an exciting time, as researchers continue to study new ways to diagnose and treat dementia. While there are no widely available treatments to prevent or stop the mental decline of dementia, new treatments are showing some promise. To be most effective, we need to be able to use such treatments very early on in the development of dementia. This means we need to know reliable signs of dementia and good assessment tools that will identify them. [Brain scans](#) are helping, as are some other tests.

Recent [news reports](#) tell us that research shows promising results for new medication, as it measurably slows the progression of Alzheimer's Disease. The research also shows some risks, such as brain swelling and bleeding in a small percentage of study participants. Some experts also urge caution, as the measure used in the study may not translate into changes that are experienced as meaningful to the individuals diagnosed with Alzheimer's or their families.



Attend Our Caregiver Webinar Series

COPSA is starting the new year with a back-to-basic series for our caregiver webinars, starting with the topic *Understanding Dementia*. While these webinars are designed primarily for informal (unpaid) caregivers they are often useful and informative for professional (paid) caregivers as well, especially staff who are new to working with people with memory loss.

Different Types of Dementia

Alzheimer's Disease is not the only type of dementia, although it is the most common.

Frontotemporal dementia is most often diagnosed in people aged 45-65. The first signs may be difficulties with language and/or changes in personality and behavior, rather than memory loss. It tends to run in families.

UK Alzheimer's Society [Video](#) (about 3 min)

Lewy Body Dementia is the second most common form of dementia. The early signs are similar to Alzheimer's (impaired thinking, memory loss, trouble understanding visual information). Over time, some people go on to develop certain physical problems, such as tremors, stiffness, and movement difficulties.

Lewy Body Dementia Association [website](#)
Mayo Clinic [Video](#) (about 3 minutes)

Parkinson's Disease Dementia: About half of people with Parkinson's develop mild cognitive impairment. While these changes in memory and thinking are often noticeable, they do not always affect daily activities. Some go on to develop greater difficulties and may be diagnosed with this form of dementia, which is also a form of Lewy Body Disease.

Michael J Fox Foundation [Video](#): Cognitive Impairment and PD (about 4 ½ minutes)

Vascular Dementia is caused by damage to the blood vessels in the brain, often due to stroke. Not everyone with these conditions or a history of stroke will develop dementia. Early signs include difficulty with some tasks or with following instructions, as well as memory and sleep problems. Progression is variable and may include short periods of improvement.

National Institute on Aging [website](#)

For More Information

In May 2022, the federal Administration on Aging produced a report listing [dementia training resources](#) that may be useful for Adult Day Center staff and for informal (family) caregivers, which includes print, webinar, and video resources on different types of dementia.

Care2Caregivers Website

You can find the [Adult Day Resources pages](#) on our website through the drop-down menu in the Professional Resources section. Check out our manual on *Foundations of Dementia Enabled Care* and the related video series to use when training your staff.

As always, you can access the Self-Care resources on our website for free. Use our NEW link:

Self-Care for Professional Caregivers
<https://care2caregivers.com/professional-resources/self-care/>

Upcoming Caregiver Education 2023

Understanding Dementia
January 19, 2023 1:00pm
Click [HERE](#) to register

Communicating with Skill and Heart
February 16, 2023 1:00pm
Click [HERE](#) to register

Managing Challenging Behaviors
March 15, 2023 1:00pm
Click [HERE](#) to register

For more info email Mary Catherine:
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890-424-2494



visit our website www.care2caregivers.com for information on caregiver support groups

1-800-424-2494