



COPING WITH AN ALZHEIMER'S OR OTHER DEMENTIA DIAGNOSIS



Information about Alzheimer's and Dementia

- There are several types of dementia and Alzheimer's is the most common one.
- Dementia is a progressive condition that gets worse over time. For some it may progress rapidly, for others more gradually over many years. Symptoms can improve with treatment, though there is no known cure. Caregiving demands will increase over time.
- Dementia can cause memory loss, personality changes, confusion, difficulty with daily activities like dressing and bathing, and wandering, among other changes.
- People living with dementia often experience increased confusion later in the day and evening. This is commonly referred to as "sundowning," and may be addressed by managing unmet needs and/or pain and by better organizing the flow of the day.
- Long term memory is often less impaired than short-term memory. They may enjoy talking about previous life experiences. Keep pictures or memorable objects nearby. Ask open-ended questions with no right or wrong answer.
- Follow their conversation and avoid correcting them or pointing out their mistakes. Arguing can lead to feelings of anger. Changing the topic can help if they are frustrated or upset.
- The Dementia Alliance of NC's Melanie Bunn leads a great video on *Showing Love for People with Dementia*, found at this website:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T_VtIJNokDU&feature=youtu.be

Where to get help:

- **Dementia Alliance of North Carolina**
Helpline: 800-228-8738 Phone: 919-832-3732 www.dementianc.org
The Alliance's primary goal is to improve the lives of caregivers and people living with all types of dementia, including Alzheimer's, in North Carolina. They facilitate access to resources, support research, and educate the public about dementia.
- **Eastern North Carolina Chapter of Alzheimer's Association**
24/7 Helpline: 800-272-3900
Chapter provides education and support to all those facing Alzheimer's and other dementias, including those living with the disease, caregivers, health care professionals,

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and families. Committed to advocating for the needs and rights of those facing Alzheimer's, advancing research and treatment, prevention, and ultimately a cure.

- **Duke Dementia Family Support Program**

(919) 660-7510 (Main phone number) 1-800-646-2028 (Toll free)

Email: Natalie.Leary@duke.edu

Services: Offers no-cost consultation, education, and support to people living with dementia and family care partners. Central NC Project C.A.R.E. family consultants provide modified care management and award limited respite vouchers. Vouchers are for family caregivers with loved ones diagnosed with dementia living at home. Call or email for more information. Speak Spanish.

- **Program For All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE), NC PACE Association**

<https://ncpace.org/Default.aspx>; Call (919) 234-1707 for more information.

Services: PACE provides comprehensive health care services (including Alzheimer's and dementia treatment and care services) that allow individuals 55 years and older who qualify for nursing level care to remain in the community with their family and friends.

- **Community Alternatives Program for Disabled Adults (CAP/DA), Chatham County Health Department**

Contact: Shvaughn J. Ross, SW, Lead CAP Case Manager, (919) 542-8265

shvaughn.ross@chathamnc.org

Services: Offers an alternative for elderly and disabled individuals, who are eligible for Medicaid and face possible placement in a nursing home.

- **Safe Return Program (alert bracelets/registry) , 1-888-572-8566, www.medicalalert.org**

Address for requests by mail: Medic Alert Foundation, PO Box 21009, Lansing, MI 48909

- **Chatham County Council on Aging www.chathamcouncilonaging.org**

Eastern Chatham Senior Center, 365 Highway 87 N, Pittsboro, (919) 542-4512

Western Chatham Senior Center, 112 Village Lake Road, Siler City, (919) 742-3975

Services: Offers a Caregiver Support Group and a variety of services to help older adults remain living safely at home. These include home-delivered meals, loaning of assistive equipment, in-home personal care, medical transportation, and respite and other supports for family caregivers (including the Powerful Tools for Caregivers course).

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