

# First Link® Bulletin

Your link to dementia support

**October – December 2022**



Updates on  
programs and  
services

*See inside for dementia programs  
in North & Central Vancouver Island*

## **We're changing our hours temporarily!**

Effective on **October 26, 27 and 28**, the First Link® Dementia Helpline will be available between 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. due to our annual All Staff Education for team development.

## **Finding meaningful connections through support groups**

The Alzheimer Society of B.C.'s caregiver support groups are based on the information and mutual aid model, following the philosophy that people in similar situations are in a unique position to give and receive support from others along the dementia journey.

Caring for a family member or friend living with dementia can be isolating for many, as those in your social network may not be able to fully understand or relate to the caregiver experience. A support group provides that connection to others who truly "get it" so no one has to walk this journey alone.

In a support group, we see people connect at a deep level and share things that they might not have been able to say outside of the group. Sometimes tears are shared but often there is laughter and moments of joy shared too. A support group can provide that sense of belonging and genuine understanding many caregivers are missing in their day to day lives and the friendships formed here frequently transcend the group and become a vital lifeline.

To register for a support group, visit pages 8 – 10.

For more information, visit our webpage at

**[alzbc.org/support-group](http://alzbc.org/support-group)**.

## **Support group facilitators needed!**

Join our volunteer team! We're seeking passionate, caring, and community-oriented people to facilitate our in-person and virtual support groups. Provide caregivers a chance to learn about and connect with others on the dementia journey. Facilitation training will be provided.

You must be available for a minimum one-year commitment. The role is best suited for those who are not actively caregiving. If you are currently a primary caregiver and you know a family member or friend who would make a great support group facilitator, we encourage you to share this volunteer position with them. To learn more, email **[kmckercher@alzheimerbc.org](mailto:kmckercher@alzheimerbc.org)** or complete an online application, at **[alzbc.org/volunteer](http://alzbc.org/volunteer)**.

### **In-person and virtual programs available**

While we continue to offer our programs virtually, we are also continuing to expand our in-person sessions.

#### **Dementia education**

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## Learn about dementia and connect with others through dementia education

**Our dementia workshops educate and empower people living with dementia and their families and friends.**

Education workshops are interactive sessions for people looking to learn about dementia and connect with others. These workshops provide opportunities for small group discussions and are available in-person and online.

### Registration:

**In-person workshops:** Call our First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-800-936-6033. Proof of full vaccination will be required to attend in-person programs.

**Online workshops:** Register online by visiting [alzbc.org/edu-workshops](http://alzbc.org/edu-workshops) or call the First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-800-936-6033. You will receive an email with a link to join the event prior to the event date.

### In-person dementia education in North & Central Vancouver Island

With increased knowledge surrounding safety measures and high level of vaccinations across B.C., we have updated our safety protocols based on the current recommendations from the B.C. government.

Masks are now optional, but proof of full vaccination will still be required to attend in-person programs. To learn more about safety protocols, visit: [alzbc.org/COVID-safety](http://alzbc.org/COVID-safety)

In-person workshop	Date	Location
<b>Life in long-term care</b>   Learn how to adjust your role as a caregiver after a person living with dementia has moved into long-term care. Tips for enhancing your visits, working with a care team, and acting as an advocate.  For caregivers.	Wednesday, October 5 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.	<b>Nanaimo</b> Nanaimo Vancouver Island Regional Library branch 90 Commercial Street
<b>Focus of behaviour: Bathing and hygiene</b>   Learn how dementia impacts bathing and hygiene and explore strategies for managing these changes.  For caregivers.	Thursday, October 6 2 – 4 p.m.	<b>Nanaimo</b> Nanaimo North End Library branch 6250 Hammond Bay Road
<b>Getting to know dementia</b>   Enhance your knowledge about dementia and learn about the different types of resources that are available at any stage of the disease.  For caregivers and people living with dementia.	Wednesday, October 19 10 a.m. – noon	<b>Courtenay</b> Courtenay Vancouver Island Regional Library branch 300 6th Street

**To register, call the First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-800-936-6033**

## In-person dementia education in North & Central Vancouver Island

In-person workshop	Date	Location
<p><b>Shaping the journey: Living with dementia (five-part series)</b>   Explore the dementia journey in a supportive environment with others going through similar experiences. Learn about the brain and dementia, strategies for coping with changes, maximizing quality of life and planning for the future.</p> <p>For caregivers.</p>	<p>Five Tuesdays, November 1 – 29 10 a.m. – noon</p>	<p><b>Courtenay</b> Specific location TBD</p> <p>For more information, call the First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-800-936-6033.</p>
<p><b>Family caregiver series (four-part series)</b>   An education series about dementia for people caring for someone living with dementia.</p> <p>Topics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding dementia (types, causes, progression)</li> <li>• Communication and behaviour (e.g. repetitive questions, confusion)</li> <li>• Planning for the future</li> <li>• Building caregiver resilience</li> </ul>	<p>Four Thursdays, November 3 – 24 10 a.m. – noon</p>	<p><b>Duncan</b> Specific location TBD</p> <p>For more information, call the First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-800-936-6033.</p>
<p><b>Accessing services</b>   Learn about community supports like home care and adult day programs, as well as how to address challenges and work with health-care providers.</p> <p>For caregivers.</p>	<p>Tuesday, December 6 10 a.m. – noon</p>	<p><b>Duncan</b> Specific location TBD</p> <p>For more information, call the First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-800-936-6033.</p>

**To register, call the First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-800-936-6033**

## Online dementia education

All sessions are hosted in Microsoft Teams. If you are new to using Teams and would like a chance to practice connecting to a meeting before the session, please call our First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-800-936-6033 or email [info.helpline@alzheimerbc.org](mailto:info.helpline@alzheimerbc.org).

**Please note these sessions are not recorded – only register if you plan to attend live.** Register at [alzbc.org/edu-workshops](http://alzbc.org/edu-workshops) or call 1-800-936-6033.

Online workshop	Date
<b>Making activities dementia inclusive</b>   Discuss the benefits of meaningful activities and explore how different types of activities can be dementia inclusive. Be inspired to create your own dementia-inclusive activities to help improve quality of life and maintain well-being and maximize your enjoyment together. For caregivers and people living with dementia.	Thursday, October 6 2 – 3:30 p.m.
<b>Long-distance caregiving</b>   Learn practical tips on providing meaningful caregiving support from a distance. For caregivers.	Tuesday, October 11 1:30 – 3 p.m.
<b>Recognizing your journey as a caregiver</b>   Discuss the personal challenges, guilt, and grief of being a dementia caregiver. Learn how to recognize signs of burnout, the importance of self-care and how you can build your resilience as a caregiver.	Thursday, October 20 6 – 7:30 p.m.
<b>Travelling with dementia</b>   Learn about the challenges, safety concerns and strategies when travelling with dementia. For caregivers and people living with dementia.	Thursday, November 3 10 – 11:30 a.m.
<b>Getting to know dementia: What is dementia?</b>   Enhance your knowledge about dementia and learn about the different types of resources that are available at any stage of the disease. For caregivers and people living with dementia.	Tuesday, November 8 10 – 11:30 a.m.
<b>Preparing for the holidays</b>   Explore strategies for adapting your plans to minimize stress and to maximize connection. For caregivers.	Tuesday, November 22 6 – 7:30 p.m.
<b>Focus on behaviour: Targeted strategies for word salad, confabulation, wanting to go home and asking for deceased relatives</b>   Learn specific strategies for responding to behaviours that dementia caregivers often ask us about, including wanting to go home and asking about deceased relatives. For caregivers.	Thursday November 24 2 – 3:30 p.m.
<b>Focus on behaviour: Targeted strategies for denial, paranoia, shadowing and anxiety</b>   Learn specific strategies for responding to four commonly experienced behaviours that people ask us about. For caregivers.	Tuesday, December 13 6:30 – 8 p.m.

**Register at [alzbc.org/edu-workshops](http://alzbc.org/edu-workshops) or call 1-800-936-6033**

## Learn about dementia from anywhere in our live weekly webinars

Learn strategies for living well with dementia at our free webinars offered each Wednesday, typically at 2 p.m. Our trained presenters share tips and strategies in a lecture-style format. All you need is a computer, tablet or phone to participate and connect with others on the dementia journey.

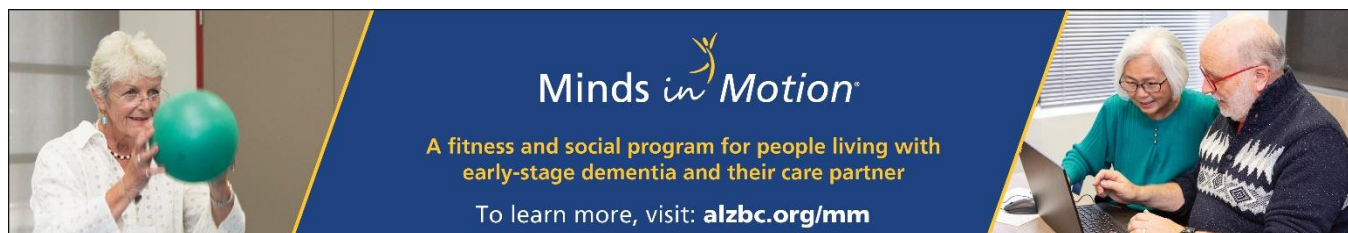
All sessions are hosted in Microsoft Teams. To register for our upcoming webinars, visit our website at [alzbc.org/webinars](http://alzbc.org/webinars). You can watch the education content on-demand at [alzbc.org/ondemand](http://alzbc.org/ondemand).



Webinar	Date
<b>MAiD and Dementia with Dr. Dirk Coetsee</b>   Dr. Dirk Coetsee, a MAiD (Medical Assistance in Dying) provider in B.C., will join us to share his experiences and information about the current law and practices for MAiD in B.C. as it relates to dementia. For caregivers and people living with dementia.	Tuesday, October 4 2 – 3 p.m.  <b>*Please note this session is held on Tuesday</b>
<b>Focus on behaviour: Delusions, hallucinations and visual mistakes</b>   Explore strategies for responding to delusions, hallucinations and visual mistakes caused by dementia. For caregivers.	Wednesday, October 12 2 – 3 p.m.
<b>Grief and loss and the dementia experience - panel discussion</b>   Join Society staff members Leanne Shuttleworth, Castine Breckwoldt and Kim McKercher for a conversation around grief and loss. Each panelist will draw on their past experiences working in a variety of hospice and long-term care settings to address some of the most common questions we hear from families impacted by dementia. For caregivers and people living with dementia.	Wednesday, October 19 2 – 3 p.m.
<i>The Alzheimer Society of B.C. will be closed on Wednesday, October 26 for our annual All Staff Education for team development. Our webinars will resume the following week on Wednesday, November 2.</i>	<b>*No webinar on Wednesday, October 26</b>
Register online at <a href="http://alzbc.org/webinars">alzbc.org/webinars</a>	

Webinar	Date
<b>Mapping your journey: Stages and progression of dementia</b>   While each dementia journey is unique, there are some signposts to the stages of dementia. Learn about what to expect as the disease progresses and how you can manage changes as they happen. For caregivers and people living with dementia.	Wednesday, November 2 2 – 3 p.m.
<b>Getting to know dementia: Responding to a diagnosis</b>   Learn practical strategies to live as well as possible after a diagnosis of dementia and explore different types of resources that are available at any stage of the disease. For caregivers and people living with dementia.	Wednesday, November 9 2 – 3 p.m.
<b>Understanding communication changes</b>   Explore how communication is affected by dementia and learn effective communication strategies. For caregivers.	Wednesday, November 16 2 – 3 p.m.
<b>Lived experience: Caregivers' creative expression of the dementia journey</b>   Join a panel of caregivers as they share how their discovery of different mediums like art, poetry or music have helped them navigate the complexities of the dementia journey. Learn tips for getting started with your own creative exploration as a way to cope and find meaning as a dementia caregiver.	Wednesday, November 23 2 – 3 p.m.
<b>Accessing services</b>   Learn about community supports like home care and adult day programs, as well as how to address challenges and work with health-care providers. For caregivers.	Wednesday, November 30 2 – 3 p.m.
<b>Dementia-friendly cancer care with Dr. Shelley Canning</b>   Navigating the cancer journey can be especially difficult for people living with dementia and their caregivers. Guest presenter Dr. Shelley Canning, Associate Professor in Nursing at the University of the Fraser Valley, will share early findings in her study exploring how to develop a dementia-friendly care approach to providing medical care for cancer patients. For caregivers and people living with dementia.	Wednesday, December 7 2 – 3 p.m.
<b>Planning for health-care, legal and financial decisions</b>   Learn strategies for planning now, before dementia affects the ability to communicate. Learn how to begin early legal, health-care and financial planning to prepare for your future. For caregivers and people living with dementia.	Wednesday, December 14 2 – 3 p.m.
<b>Register online at <a href="https://alzbc.org/webinars">alzbc.org/webinars</a></b>	





Minds in Motion®	Date	Registration
<b>Nanaimo (in-person)</b> Beban Park Social Center 2300 Bowen Road	Five Thursdays, November 10 – December 15 10 a.m. – noon *No class on November 17	Contact Beban Park Social Center at 250-756-5200. <b>Cost:</b> \$40 per pair for five sessions
	Five Thursdays, November 10 – December 15 1 – 3 p.m. *No class on November 17	
<b>Courtenay (in-person)</b> Lower Native Sons Hall 360 Cliffe Avenue	Six Wednesdays, November 2 – December 7 1 – 3 p.m.	Register online at <a href="http://courtenay.ca/rec">courtenay.ca/rec</a> or call 250-338-5371 or 250-338-1000 <b>Cost:</b> \$48 per pair for six sessions
<b>Online</b> Hosted online via Microsoft Teams	<b>Groups meet weekly:</b> <b>Tuesdays:</b> 10 – 11:30 a.m. <u>or</u> 1 – 2:30 p.m. <b>Wednesdays:</b> 10 – 11:30 a.m. <b>Thursdays:</b> 1 – 2:30 p.m. <b>Fridays:</b> 1 – 2:30 p.m.	Sessions are free to attend. For more information and to register, please call the First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-800-936-6033 or visit <a href="http://alzbc.org/mm">alzbc.org/mm</a>
<b>Online (Cantonese)</b> Hosted online via Microsoft Teams	Eight Tuesdays, September 27 – November 15 1 – 2:15 p.m.	Sessions are free to attend. For more information and to register, please call the Chinese First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-833-674-5007 or email <a href="mailto:info.chinese@alzheimerbc.org">info.chinese@alzheimerbc.org</a>

## Connect with others on the dementia journey through our support groups



If you are affected by dementia, you are not alone. There are others to share the journey with you. We currently offer regional support groups in-person and provincial support groups virtually for caregivers and people living in the early stages of dementia. Please see information below regarding the groups available to you.

### To register:

- For groups in **Cantonese** and **Mandarin**, call the Chinese First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-833-674-5007
- For groups in **Punjabi** and **Hindi**, call the South Asian First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-833-674-5003
- For all other groups, call the First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-800-936-6033

*Please note that the schedule is subject to change due to holidays or other conflicts. You will be notified by your facilitator upon registration.*

### In-person caregiver support groups

Support group	Date
<b>Vancouver Island support group</b> Open to anyone on Vancouver Island who is currently caring for a person living with dementia.  Our family caregiver support groups offer a safe place to learn about dementia and community resources. Connect with other family members on the dementia journey.	<b>Parksville:</b> <b>2nd Tuesday of the month, 1 – 2:30 p.m.</b>  <b>Nanaimo:</b> <b>3rd Tuesday of the month, 10:30 a.m. – noon</b>

### Virtual general caregiver support groups

#### General support group

Open to caregivers anywhere in B.C. who are currently caring for a person living with dementia.

**1st Tuesday of the month, 7 – 8:30 p.m.**  
**2nd Monday of the month, 7 – 8:30 p.m.**  
**2nd Tuesday of the month, 7 – 8:30 p.m.**  
**2nd Friday of the month, 10 – 11:30 a.m.**  
**3rd Monday of the month, 2 – 3:30 p.m.**  
**3rd Tuesday of the month, 2 – 3:30 p.m.**  
**3rd Thursday of the month, 10 – 11:30 a.m.**  
**3rd Thursday of the month, 2 – 3:30 p.m.**  
**3rd Thursday of the month, 7 – 8:30 p.m.**  
**4th Monday of the month, 2 – 3:30 p.m.**  
**4th Tuesday of the month, 2 – 3:30 p.m.**  
**4th Thursday of the month, 10 – 11:30 a.m.**

**Register by calling the First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-800-936-6033**



## Virtual general caregiver support groups

Support group	Date
<b>General support group (Punjabi/Hindi)</b> Open to anyone in B.C. who speaks Punjabi or Hindi and is currently caring for a person living with dementia.	For more information, call the South Asian First Link Dementia® Helpline at 1-833-674-5003.
<b>General support group (Cantonese)</b> Open to anyone in B.C. who speaks Cantonese and is currently caring for a person living with dementia.	<b>4th Tuesday of the month, 10 – 11:30 a.m.</b> <b>4th Tuesday of the month, 2 – 3:30 p.m.</b>
<b>General support group (Mandarin)</b> Open to anyone in B.C. who speaks Mandarin and is currently caring for a person living with dementia.	<b>2nd Thursday of the month, 2 – 3:30 p.m.</b>

## Virtual specialized support groups

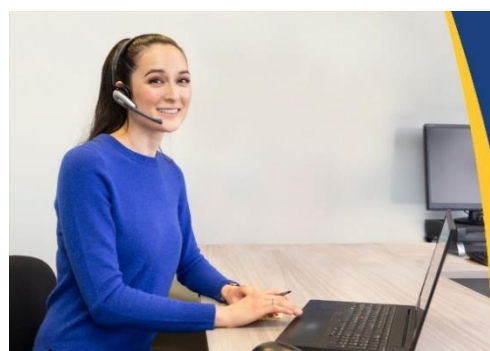
<b>Adult children support group</b> Open to caregivers anywhere in B.C. who are caring for a parent living with dementia.	<b>1st Thursday of the month, 7 – 8:30 p.m.</b> <b>2nd Wednesday of the month, 7 – 8:30 p.m.</b> <b>2nd Thursday of the month, 6:30 – 8 p.m.</b> <b>3rd Tuesday of the month, 7 – 8:30 p.m.</b> <b>3rd Thursday of the month, 6:30 – 8 p.m.</b> <b>4th Tuesday of the month, 7 – 8:30 p.m.</b>
<b>Young onset support group</b> Open to caregivers anywhere in B.C. who are caring for a person living with dementia who was diagnosed before the age of 65.	<b>2nd Tuesday of the month, 7 – 8:30 p.m.</b> <b>4th Wednesday of the month, 6:30 – 8 p.m.</b>
<b>Long-term care support group</b> Open to caregivers anywhere in B.C. who are caring for a person living with dementia in a long-term care home.	<b>3rd Tuesday of the month, 10 – 11:30 a.m.</b> <b>3rd Tuesday of the month, 7 – 8:30 p.m.</b> <b>3rd Wednesday of the month, 7 – 8:30 p.m.</b> <b>4th Thursday of the month, 2 – 3:30 p.m.</b>
<b>LGBTQ2S+ support group</b> Open to LGBTQ2S+ caregivers or caregivers of a person living with dementia who identifies as LGBTQ2S+ anywhere in B.C.	<b>1st Wednesday of the month, 7 – 8:30 p.m.</b>
<b>Lewy body dementia support group</b> Open to caregivers anywhere in B.C. who are caring for a person living with Lewy body dementia.	<b>4th Wednesday of the month, noon – 1:30 p.m.</b>
<b>BvFTD support group</b> Open to caregivers anywhere in B.C. who are caring for someone with behavioural variant frontotemporal dementia (bvFTD).	<b>4th Monday of the month, 7 – 8:30 p.m.</b>

Register by calling the First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-800-936-6033 (English), 1-833-674-5007 (Cantonese or Mandarin) or 1-833-674-5003 (Punjabi or Hindi)

## Virtual early-stage groups for people living with dementia

Support group	Date
<b>Early-stage support group</b> Open to people living with early symptoms of dementia to discuss the impact of the disease, share stories, experiences and learn from one another about how to live well with dementia.  Groups meet every two weeks.	<b>Every 2nd Tuesday</b> , 3 – 4 p.m. <b>Every 2nd Wednesday</b> , 10 – 11 a.m. (telephone only) <b>Every 2nd Thursday</b> , 11 a.m. – noon
<b>Early-stage coffee and chat</b> Open to people living with early symptoms of dementia to socialize, share experiences, laugh and enjoy the company of others who are living the dementia experience.  Groups meet every two weeks.	<b>Every 2nd Monday</b> , 1:30 – 2:30 p.m. <b>Every 2nd Thursday</b> , 11 a.m. – noon

Register by calling the First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-800-936-6033



**Alzheimer Society**  
BRITISH COLUMBIA

For questions on memory loss or living with dementia, call the free confidential **First Link® Dementia Helpline** (Monday to Friday):

<b>English</b>	1-800-936-6033 (9 a.m. to 8 p.m.)
<b>Cantonese or Mandarin</b>	1-833-674-5007 (9 a.m. to 4 p.m.)
<b>Punjabi</b>	1-833-674-5003 (9 a.m. to 4 p.m.)