

First Link® Bulletin

Your link to dementia support

January - March 2024



Updates on
programs and
services

*See inside for dementia programs on
the North Shore and Sunshine Coast*

Alzheimer's Awareness Month



We all strive to make the most of each day, cherishing our connections to the community and leading meaningful lives. However, receiving a dementia diagnosis can feel like an abrupt barrier; one in two British Columbians believe that a dementia diagnosis means the end of a meaningful life. But our community has illuminated a different truth: while living with dementia poses challenges, it can also reveal moments of joy and introduce us to a community of incredible resilience to help us along the way.

This January, we invite you to join us for Alzheimer's Awareness Month. Throughout the month, we will focus on sharing inspiring stories of British Columbians who have discovered renewed connections to their community or found a profound sense of belonging through our programs. We want to shed light on how our initiatives have not only assisted people affected by dementia but have also empowered them to live meaningful lives.

With over 85,000 people living with dementia in British Columbia, it is imperative that British Columbians stay well informed and equipped with the tools to navigate the dementia journey. Let's kick the new year off with a collective shift in perspective, discovering how people affected by dementia can celebrate life in ways previously unimagined.

To stay connected throughout Awareness Month, visit alzbc.org/FullofLife.

Webinar spotlight: Lived experience series

In our lived experience webinar series, people living with dementia and caregivers will share firsthand knowledge of their unique experiences on the dementia journey and the community they've gained by taking part in Society programs. These webinars are a doorway to a better understanding of dementia and an opportunity to challenge the stigma associated with dementia.

On Wednesday, January 10, Jim Mann, an advocate living with dementia, will moderate a panel discussion on living life to the fullest on the dementia journey. On Wednesday, January 24, Jana Schulz, a caregiver and registered social worker, will lead a panel discussion on the importance of finding a supportive community within our programs and services. These webinars promise unique insights and valuable perspectives. Don't miss these inspiring conversations that will empower and enlighten you, as we come together to build a more compassionate and inclusive future. Learn more on [page 6](#).

Recorded webinars from our YouTube playlist are available to watch at alzbc.org/lived-experience.

Alzheimer Society
BRITISH COLUMBIA

First Link®
YOUR LINK TO DEMENTIA SUPPORT



Ministry of
Health

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.

The online workshops are presented in a limited-sized group and will be facilitated to provide opportunities for live discussion. A range of days and times of day, including evenings, are available.

Registration

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

Online workshops: Register online by visiting 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 on the North Shore and Sunshine Coast

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 and proof of full vaccination are now optional for attending all in-person programs. To learn more about safety protocols, visit: alzbc.org/COVID-safety

In-person workshops	Date	Location
Dementia friends (We all have a part to play! Becoming a dementia friend) Small, everyday actions can help build a community that is inclusive, supportive of and safe for people living with dementia. For the general public.	Tuesday, January 30 2 to 3:30 p.m. <i>Please register by January 23</i>	West Vancouver Location details will be provided upon registration *Register online at: westvanlibrary.ca/event
An Introduction to brain health It's never too late to make changes for a healthier brain. Learn how to maintain or improve your brain health by exploring topics including natural aging changes, dementia, risk reduction, memory, brain training and more. For the general public.	Wednesday, January 31 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. <i>Please register by January 24</i>	North Vancouver Location details will be provided upon registration
Navigating the dementia journey Explore the journey ahead with others who are going through similar experiences. Topics include: the brain and dementia, how to respond to the diagnosis, practical strategies to live well and how to access resources, so that people impacted by dementia have the confidence to navigate the journey ahead. For caregivers and people living with dementia.	Thursday, February 8 1 to 3 p.m. <i>Please register by February 1</i>	North Vancouver Location details will be provided upon registration

In-person workshops	Date	Location
Family caregiver series An education series for family members who are caring for a person living with dementia that covers understanding dementia, communication and behaviour, as well as planning for the future and self-care. For caregivers.	Three Thursdays, February 15 - February 29 6 to 8:30 p.m. <i>Please register by February 8</i>	North Vancouver Location details will be provided upon registration
What is dementia? Learn how dementia affects an individual's brain and behaviour. General topics include different types of dementia, stages and progression and dispelling some common myths. For the general public.	Wednesday, March 27 1 to 3 p.m. <i>Please register by March 20</i>	Powell River Location details will be provided upon registration *Register at 604-485-4796 ext. 206 or mmerlino@prpl.ca .
Understanding behaviour and communication changes Explore various changes in behaviour and communication caused by dementia and learn practical strategies for responding in supportive ways. For caregivers.	Thursday, March 28 10 a.m. to noon <i>Please register by March 21</i>	Powell River Location details will be provided upon registration
Drop-in hours with the Alzheimer Society of B.C. Have questions and concerns about dementia? Drop-in to visit our staff and learn about helpful resources and strategies.	Thursday, March 28 1 to 3 p.m.	Powell River Powell River Public Library 100 - 6975 Alberni Street
To register, call the First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-800-936-6033		

Online workshops

All sessions are hosted on Zoom. If you are new to using Zoom 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.

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


Online workshops	Date
Making activities dementia inclusive Remaining active and meaningfully engaged is vital for people living with dementia to live well. Discuss how you can adapt different kinds of activities to be inclusive of the person living with the disease to help improve quality of life and enjoy your time together. For caregivers and people living with dementia.	Thursday, January 11 6:30 to 8 p.m.
Mapping your journey: Stages and progression of dementia 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.	Thursday, January 25 10 to 11:30 a.m.
Enhancing your visits with a person in long-term care Providing a sense of comfort and social support are some of the ways to help a person in long-term care to adjust to their new environment. Explore visiting tips and activity ideas so you can make the most out of the visits. For caregivers.	Thursday, February 1 6:30 to 8 p.m.
Working with the care team in long-term care Caring for someone in long-term care brings a change in role for caregivers as the support team expands. Learn how to adjust your caregiving role and work effectively with the care team to ensure the person receives the care they need, and you also feel supported. For caregivers.	Thursday, February 15 6:30 to 8 p.m.
Getting your affairs in order: Health-care, legal and financial planning Early in the dementia journey it can feel daunting to think about what lies ahead – but it's important to plan now, before communication and decision-making become more challenging. Learn how to begin planning early for important legal, health-care and financial decisions. For caregivers and people living with dementia.	Tuesday, February 20 10 to 11:30 a.m.

Online workshops	Date
Personal care: Bathing and hygiene Bathing is often a highly private, personal activity and people living with dementia may need help when they're feeling vulnerable. Learn about common hygiene challenges and effective strategies to maintain a successful routine. For caregivers.	Tuesday, March 5 6:30 to 8 p.m.
Understanding behaviour changes Explore various changes in behaviours caused by dementia and learn practical strategies for responding in supportive ways. For caregivers.	Thursday, March 21 2 to 3:30 p.m.
Creating a safe home environment: Identifying and minimizing risks Learn to identify safety risks in the home and make adaptations to prevent accidents. Topics include safety measures for medications, food, hazardous substances, and more. For caregivers and people living with dementia.	Thursday, March 28 2 to 3:30 p.m.
Register at alzbc.org/edu-workshops or call 1-800-936-6033	

Coffee and chat

A social program designed to help you meet new people, engage in social activities and have fun!

To learn more, visit alzbc.org/coffee-chat



Coffee and chat	Date	Registration
Online	Every second Thursday, 11 a.m. to noon	Please call the First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-800-936-6033.

For more information, please call the First Link® Dementia Helpline at 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 on Zoom. To register for our upcoming webinars, visit our website at alzbc.org/webinars. You can watch the education content on-demand at alzbc.org/ondemand.



Webinar	Date
Lived experience panel discussion: Living life to the fullest with Jim Mann In this lived experience webinar series, people living with dementia share their firsthand knowledge and unique experiences on the dementia journey. These webinars are a doorway to a better understanding of dementia and an opportunity to challenge the stigma associated with dementia. In this webinar, Jim Mann, an advocate living with dementia, will moderate a panel discussion on living life to the fullest on the dementia journey.	Wednesday, January 10 2 to 3:30 p.m.
The power of effective personal planning with guest Emily Clough Never underestimate the power of effective personal estate planning. They are far more than just papers! Join Emily Clough, a Partner with Clark Wilson LLP who is a sought-after voice, particularly for clients with incapacity issues and to protect the rights of vulnerable adults. Emily will share her expertise and tips, including how personal planning documents can be important to assist in accessing services and home care. While it can feel daunting to think about what lies ahead, it's important to plan now, before communication and decision-making become more challenging. For caregivers and people living with dementia.	Wednesday, January 17 2 to 3:30 p.m.
Lived experience panel discussion: Finding a supportive community with Jana Schulz In this lived experience webinar series, caregivers share their firsthand knowledge and unique experiences on the dementia journey and how the Alzheimer Society of B.C.'s support provided a sense of community. These webinars are a doorway to a better understanding of dementia and an opportunity to challenge the stigma associated with dementia. In this webinar, Jana Schulz, a caregiver and registered social worker, will lead a panel discussion on the importance of finding a supportive community within our programs and services.	Wednesday, January 24 2 to 3:30 p.m.
An introduction to brain health It's never too late to make changes for a healthier brain. Learn how to maintain or improve your brain health by exploring topics including natural aging changes, dementia, risk reduction, memory, brain training and more. For the general public.	Wednesday, January 31 2 to 3:30 p.m.

Webinar	Date
<p>Accessing dementia services and support Navigating health-care systems and looking for support services can be overwhelming. Learn about community supports – including home care, respite and adult day programs – as well as how to address challenges in accessing them. For caregivers.</p>	<p>Wednesday, February 7 2 to 3:30 p.m.</p>
<p>Care at home: Caregiver stories Join us to hear from two experienced caregivers who will share their experiences and learning on their dementia journey as they supported their person at home. We will also hear from a gerontologist caregiver coach from the Family Caregivers of BC support team who will share beneficial caregiver resources and discuss the importance of creating a circle of care/support system for the caregiver.</p>	<p>Wednesday, February 14 2 to 3:30 p.m.</p>
<p>The “why” behind the “Flipping stigma on its ear” toolkit Join us for the final webinar of the four-part <i>Flipping stigma</i> series, with a focus on the research behind the “Flipping stigma on its ear” toolkit. Representatives from the UBC research team along with action group members living with dementia, will discuss the importance of participatory action research and address the underlying stigma and misconceptions of dementia that exist in the research field. We’ll conclude the series with a look at the toolkit’s global impact and what’s next for the team.</p>	<p>Wednesday, February 21 2 to 3:30 p.m.</p>
<p>Care at home: Practical tips for safe and dignified care Join us to increase your confidence in providing physical care in the home. Hear from community health care professionals who will share practical tips for common caregiving activities while maintaining dignity and safety.</p>	<p>Wednesday, February 28 2 to 3:30 p.m.</p>
<p>Research connects: Topic TBA Join us as we explore various topics related to dementia research. In order to be as responsive as possible to the latest news in dementia research, the specific topic will be announced closer to the date.</p>	<p>Wednesday, March 6 2 to 3:30 p.m.</p>
<p>Care at home: Moving from resistance to collaboration Changes in the brain due to dementia can affect abilities and behaviours; it can be frustrating when the person you’re caring for is responding in an unexpected way. Join us to explore various behaviours changes and what might be causing them, and learn practical strategies for responding in supportive ways while providing care at home.</p>	<p>Wednesday, March 13 2 to 3:30 p.m.</p>
<p>Register online at alzbc.org/webinars</p>	

Webinar	Date
What is dementia? Learn how dementia affects an individual's brain and behaviour. General topics include different types of dementia, stages and progression and dispelling some common myths. For caregivers and people living with dementia.	Wednesday, March 20 2 to 3:30 p.m.
Dementia diagnosis: What next? Explore how to navigate life after a dementia diagnosis alongside others who are also on the dementia journey. Discuss the disease's impact on family, learn practical strategies to live well and access resources that are available at any stage of the disease. For caregivers and people living with dementia.	Wednesday, March 27 2 to 3:30 p.m.
Register online at alzbc.org/webinars	

Minds in Motion®

A fitness and social program for people living with early-stage dementia and a care partner.

To learn more, visit alzbc.org/MindsinMotion



Minds in Motion®	Date	Registration
North Vancouver Silver Harbour Centre 144 East 22nd Street	Eight Fridays, January 19 - March 15 9:45 to 11:15 a.m. <i>No class February 16</i>	Register in-person at Silver Harbour Centre or call 604-980-2474. Cost: \$64 per pair for eight sessions.
West Vancouver West Vancouver Seniors' Activity Centre 695 21st Street	Eight Fridays, January 19 - March 15 1 to 2:30 p.m. <i>No class February 16</i>	Register in-person at the Seniors' Activity Centre or call 604-925-7280. Cost: \$72 per pair for eight sessions.

Minds in Motion®	Date	Registration
Sechelt Sechelt Aquatic Centre 5500 Shorncliffe Avenue	Eleven Fridays, January 12 - March 22 10 a.m. to noon	Register online at activecommunities.com/scrd or call 604-885-6801 (Program ID #82726) Cost: \$110 per pair for 11 sessions.
Online (English) Hosted online via Zoom	Groups meet weekly (beginning January 16): Tuesdays: 1 to 2:30 p.m. Wednesdays: 10 to 11:30 a.m. Thursdays: 1 to 2:30 p.m. Fridays: 10 to 11:30 a.m.	Groups are free to attend. For more information and to register, please call the First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-800-936-6033 or visit alzbc.org/mm .

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 note: Due to the high level of interest in our support groups for people living with dementia and for caregivers, we are only listing groups with space for new members. If you're interested in joining a support group but do not see one for your area, please call the First Link® Dementia Helpline and we will add you to an interest list.

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
North shore and Sunshine Coast Open to anyone on the North Shore and Sunshine Coast 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.	North and West Vancouver For more information, please call the First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-800-936-6033. North Vancouver (Farsi)* 3rd Wednesday of the month, 6:30 to 8 p.m. <i>*To register, please call 604-449-5002 or email info.northshore@alzheimerbc.org</i>

In-person early-stage support group

Support group	Date
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.	North Vancouver 2nd Wednesday of the month, 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Virtual general caregiver support group

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 to 8:30 p.m. 2nd Monday of the month, 7 to 8:30 p.m. 2nd Friday of the month, 10 to 11:30 a.m. 3rd Thursday of the month, 2 to 3:30 p.m. 4th Tuesday of the month, 2 to 3:30 p.m.
General support group (Cantonese) Open to anyone in B.C. who speaks Cantonese and is currently caring for a person living with dementia.	For more information, please call the Chinese First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-833-674-5007.
General support group (Mandarin) Open to anyone in B.C. who speaks Mandarin and is currently caring for a person living with dementia.	For more information, please call the Chinese First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-833-674-5007.
General support group (Punjabi/Hindi) 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.

Virtual specialized support groups

Adult children support group Open to caregivers anywhere in B.C. who are caring for a parent living with dementia.	For more information, please call the First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-800-936-6033.
Young onset support group Open to caregivers anywhere in B.C. who are caring for a person living with dementia who was diagnosed before the age of 65.	For more information, please call the First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-800-936-6033.

Support group	Date
Long-term care support group Open to caregivers anywhere in B.C. who are caring for a person living with dementia in a long-term care home.	4th Thursday of the month, 2 to 3:30 p.m. 3rd Tuesday of the month, 10 to 11:30 a.m.
2SLGBTQIA+ support group Open to 2SLGBTQIA+ caregivers or caregivers of a person living with dementia who identifies as 2SLGBTQIA+ anywhere in B.C.	1st Wednesday of the month, 7 to 8:30 p.m.
Lewy body dementia support group Open to caregivers anywhere in B.C. who are caring for a person living with Lewy body dementia.	For more information, call the South Asian First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-833-674-5003.
Early-stage support group 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.	For more information, please call the First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-800-936-6033.
BvFTD support group Open to caregivers anywhere in B.C. who are caring for someone with behavioural variant frontotemporal dementia	For more information, please call the First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-800-936-6033.
Register by calling the First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-800-936-6033 (English), 1-833-674-6033 (Cantonese and Mandarin) or 1-833-674-5003 (Punjabi, Hindi and Urdu)	