

*Soci  t  Alzheimer Society*  
NOVA SCOTIA

# 10 Symptoms & Strategies

A GUIDE FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS



# Introduction

The Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia is pleased to share with you a video of three remarkable women with early stage dementia. In this video series Anne, Faye and Sandra speak candidly about the symptoms they experience and the strategies they use to live well with dementia.

Accompanying the video is a guide available for family and friends, people with dementia and health care professionals. These guides are designed to encourage reflection and stimulate conversation, with the overall intention of providing education, sharing strategies, and reducing stigma. We hope these first voice videos will enhance supportive interactions in our communities.



*Faye*



*Anne*



*Sandra*

If you have any questions about the content of this document, the 10 symptoms and strategies, Alzheimer's disease and other dementias or the Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia please contact:

Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia  
1-800-611-6345  
alzheimer@asns.ca  
www.alzheimer.ca/ns

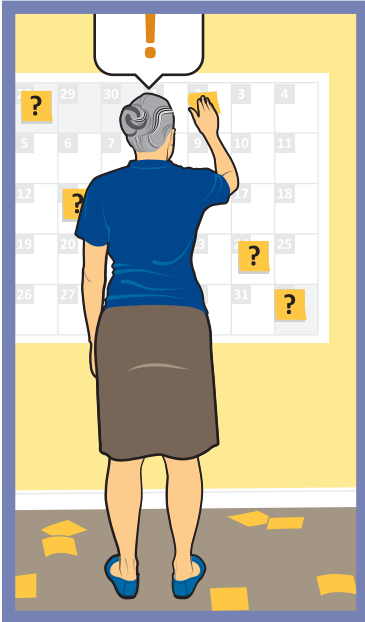


# Reflection Questions for Health Care Professionals

1

## Memory Loss that Affects Day to Day Abilities

Forgetting things often or struggling to retain new information.



*Anne asks her doctors to write down instructions for her to follow between appointments. This key information and list of follow up tasks help her maintain her independence.*

**What do you do to help your clients remember information and tasks?  
Do you have any other memory loss strategies that could help?**

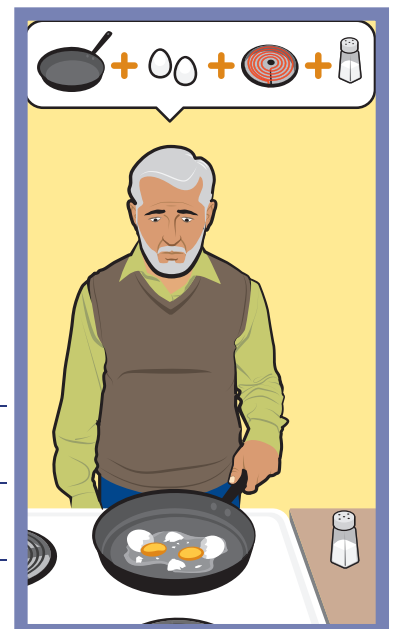
## Difficulty Performing Familiar Tasks

2

Forgetting how to do something you've been doing your whole life, such as preparing a meal or getting dressed.

*People living with dementia can have difficulty doing familiar tasks- and some tasks are a higher priority for them than others.*

**Do you learn what your client's priorities are? How do you support them in maintaining their independence with tasks that they are finding difficult?**



# Reflection Questions for Health Care Professionals

## Problems with Language

3

Forgetting words or substituting words that don't fit the context.



*Sandra talks about the effect loss of language has on her and her sense of self.*

**When you are talking with clients, what do you do to make them feel more at ease in the conversation? Is there anything that you do that may be contributing to the client's stress?**

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## Disorientation with Time and Space

4

Not knowing what day of the week it is or getting lost in a familiar place.

*Sandra had difficulty driving and getting lost in public spaces. Having conversations such as having to give up ones' drivers licence or getting lost in public spaces are tough conversations that involve safety, independence and dignity.*

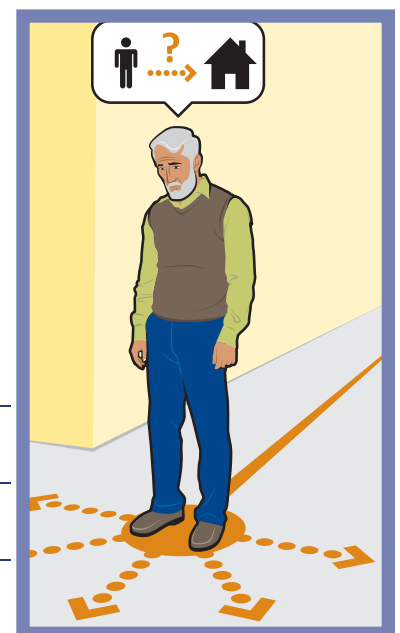
**How do you handle tough conversations? Can you suggest any resources that can help?**

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# Reflection Questions for Health Care Professionals

## Impaired Judgment

5

Not recognizing a medical problem that needs attention or wearing light clothing on a cold day.



*Faye recognizes she has impaired judgment and was doing things out of character. In her case, family came up with some strategies that solved the problem while maintaining her dignity.*

When you are problem solving with a person with dementia and their family, do you include preserving dignity as one of your guiding principles? How do you help to educate families about this? How are families helpful in educating you?

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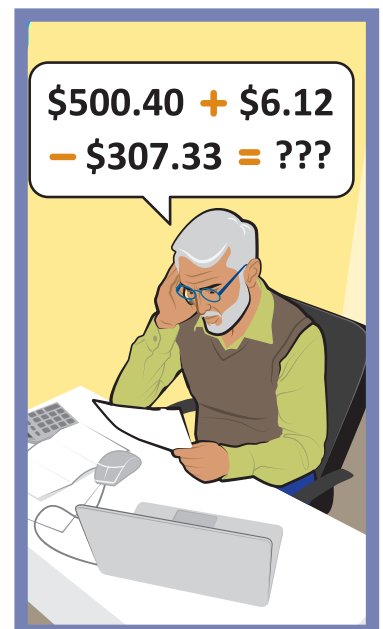
## Problems with Abstract Thinking

6

Having difficulty balancing a cheque book, for example not understanding what numbers are and how they are used.

*Anne finds that when asked questions, she is not always prepared to give an immediate answer, and may initially just say no because it is easier.*

Do you give your clients time to answer questions, or provide additional information to support them with their health care? What strategies do you offer them for making complex decisions on a day to day basis?



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# Reflection Questions for Health Care Professionals

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## Misplacing Things

Putting things in strange places, like a dress in the refrigerator or a wristwatch in the sugar bowl.



*Anne uses checklists to help keep things in order. Misplacing items can lead to frustration.*

**How do you help individuals keep track of their belongings / items?**

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8

## Changes in Mood and Behaviour

Exhibiting severe mood swings from being easy-going to quick tempered.

*Faye experiences increased anxiety with her dementia. It has an impact on her daily life.*

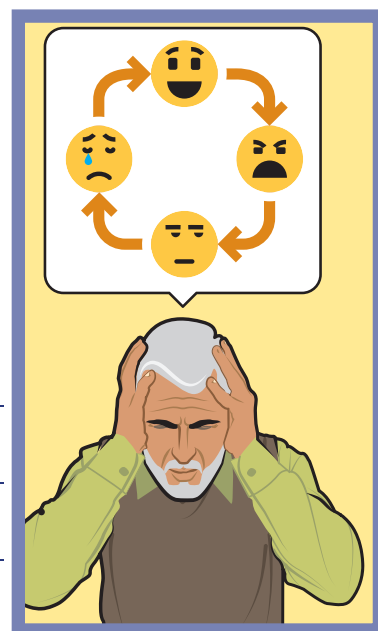
**Do you recognize and help to educate persons with dementia and their families about mood swings and emotional changes? What do you do to help people to understand the connection between these changes and the progression of the disease? How do you support the individual and caregiver to adapt their strategies and approaches?**

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# Reflection Questions for Health Care Professionals



## Changes in Personality

Behaving out of character such as becoming confused, suspicious or fearful.



*Faye experiences a loss of patience that is unpredictable and despite that it is a symptom, she still feels terrible. One of the contributing factors can be too much stimulation in the environment- too much noise overwhelms her.*

**Are you sensitive/aware of environmental factors that can impact your client? Do you discuss this with them and their families and help to problem solve? What kind of solutions have you discussed?**

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## Loss of Initiative

Losing interest in friends, family and favourite activities.

*Faye's get up and go, got up and left. Sometimes, we assume the person who is quiet is content.*

**How could this be a problem/not a problem? Do you discuss this with your client's family to ensure they help to keep the person engaged in life activities? Do you have any strategies for helping someone who is experiencing lack of initiative?**

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## Where can I find these videos?

You can view all 10 videos on our website!

Visit **[www.alzheimer.ca/ns/livingwell](http://www.alzheimer.ca/ns/livingwell)** to see the full playlist.