

In the LOOP

FALL 2023

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YEARS

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- In this issue:
- Community Week 2023
 - The Dementia Helpline
 - A Letter from our New Director of Philanthropy

...and more!

FALL 2023

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**GIVING
TUESDAY**

**Nov
28**

Save the date! We're participating in Giving Tuesday.

Giving Tuesday is a time when Canadians, charities, and businesses come together to celebrate giving and participate in activities that support charities and non-profits; to thank, help, give, show kindness, and share what they have with those in need.

Message from John Britton, CEO

In the last issue of In the Loop, I wrote about the concept of Dementia Champions and the need for the Society to be even more ingrained in our communities, with a stronger presence in rural areas. Over the past few months, we've started to see this take shape.

In the spring and summer, I traveled across the province, from Yarmouth to Cape Breton and everywhere in between, to hold in-person community meetings. I had the chance to meet many new people and learn what each unique area of the province is looking for in our services.

Just last month we held our first ever Community Week – public education and awareness events taking place in 8 locations across the province and a virtual livestream. This was an intentional effort to bring the type of events you'd often see only in Halifax to more folks throughout Nova Scotia. You can read more about this fantastic initiative on page 6.

As we move into the fall and start preparing for the new year (and our annual Awareness Month!) we hope to keep this momentum going. We have six Regional Coordinators who you can connect with to see what is happening in your community, or to request education sessions:

- **Catherine Shepherd, Cape Breton:** 902-842-1314 or catherine.shepherd@asns.ca
- **Beth Bennett, Guysborough, Antigonish & Pictou County:**
902-870-2054 or beth.bennett@asns.ca
- **Claire Jimmison, Annapolis Valley:** 902-790-4189 or claire.jimmison@asns.ca
- **Donna Lawrence, Northern Region (Cumberland, Colchester, East Hants):**
902-220-3823 or donna.lawrence@asns.ca
- **Sandra Hubbard-Leblanc, Tri-County (Yarmouth, Shelburne, Digby):**
902-774-0042 or sandra.hubbard-leblanc@asns.ca
- **Rhonda Lemire, South Shore:** 902-527-6962 or rhonda.lemire@asns.ca

Supporting people where they live, in the communities they call home, will remain a priority for ASNS as we consider the evolving and growing need in Nova Scotia.



John Britton

CEO, Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia



We would love to hear your feedback! Send us an email at alzheimer@asns.ca.

Learning About Behaviour Changes With Dementia

Catherine Shepherd

Regional Coordinator, Cape Breton
Provincial Lead, First Link® Outreach

*Originally published in
the Cape Breton Post*

Have you ever heard the term “responsive behaviours”? It’s used to describe the changes in behaviour people with dementia may experience as their condition progresses. Restlessness, agitation and losing their way are some examples. These behaviours are in response to the person’s needs and environment.

In today’s article we’re going to learn a little bit more about responsive behaviours, and what you can do if someone you know is experiencing them. I spoke with Brenda Etheridge, a Behaviour Resource Consultant with Nova Scotia Health, to provide some insight.

There are many reasons why a person with dementia might show responsive behaviours. Loneliness, boredom, distress, frustration and pain can all have an impact. They may not be able to verbally communicate what they’re feeling or need and may be using behaviours to communicate.

“When a person has dementia, expressions of behaviour are often the result of an unmet need,” says Brenda.

Ask yourself what may be influencing their behaviour. Are they experiencing discomfort? Is the space they’re in too loud, too bright or is the temperature comfortable? Is there something they need help with – getting a drink or finding the bathroom? Reflect on what their behaviour may be communicating.

It’s important to remember that we can’t expect the person with dementia to change – these behaviours are a result of changes in their brain and are beyond their control. You, as the person interacting with them, need to change your reaction and perspective to meet them where they are. Trying to provide support while also trying to figure out the meaning behind the behaviour can be frustrating. It’s okay to take a moment to think.

“When unsure, always give the person your full attention and confirm their emotion,” says Brenda. “If you still don’t understand, simply say you’re sorry and offer reassurance with a friendly face. Know that beneath every behaviour there is a feeling, and beneath each feeling is a need.”

Thinking about the “why” behind the behaviour helps us to reflect on who the person is – what they like and what they don’t, what gives them joy or what doesn’t. Looking at it from a person-first perspective helps us to figure out the “why” based on the individuality of each person. Once we figure out why the behaviour is happening, we can focus on solutions.

Dementia and Responsive Behaviours

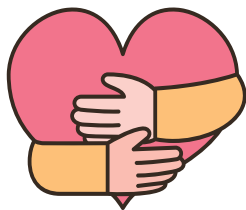
For more information, visit alzheimer.ca/ns/changes or call us at 1-800-611-6345



The term “responsive behaviours” is used to describe the changes in behaviour people with dementia may experience.



A person with dementia may not be able to verbally communicate what they’re feeling or need and may be using behaviours to communicate.



Remember that these behaviours are a result of changes in their brain and are beyond their control.

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Responding in a supportive tone, reducing noise, and distraction or redirection are all good strategies for supporting responsive behaviours. Following a consistent, simple routine can help reduce some responsive behaviours.

“Modify tasks to help maintain that sense of independence and always focus on abilities,” says Brenda.

Instead of just doing things for them, support them with options. For example: instead of asking the person what they’d like for a snack, which may cause frustration if they don’t know, give them the option of two snacks to choose from.

Learning as you go, you can create a list of potential strategies that could help support the behaviour. It’s not always easy but try to be patient and remember that it’s okay to make mistakes.

If you are supporting someone with responsive behaviours, whether it’s your friend or family member or someone you’re providing care to as a healthcare professional, we can support you with specialized programs and resources. We’re only a phone call away at 1-800-611-6345. You can also find more information and resources on our website at www.alzheimer.ca/changes.

Connection Changes Everything: Community Week 2023



Community Week 2023 was a resounding success! We owe this success to everyone who participated in learning about living well with dementia. With over 150 participants attending eight events across the province, it is clear that our communities are making strides toward becoming more dementia-friendly.

Community Week is a week-long series of events held province-wide. These events aim to feature presentations from individuals living with dementia and their caregivers, sharing their experiences and local resources that are available to assist throughout their journey with dementia.



Baddeck Community Event
September 19, 2023



At this years events, we saw a strong eagerness among participants to actively engage and gain insight. These events have highlighted that the bridge between those with dementia and local support networks is just a phone call away! With over 16,000 Nova Scotians living with dementia and thousands more caring for and supporting them, this education and access to resources is crucial for the future of our aging population.



Truro Community Event
September 20, 2023

Weaving Connections in Dementia Care



We're thrilled to be hosting our 34th Annual Conference, Weaving Connections in Dementia Care! Join us on Thursday, October 26, 2023.

Our conference offers a prime opportunity to weave ideas together and build new connections to strengthen the dementia care sector. Gather with us in person at our new venue, the Delta Hotel in Dartmouth, or join our virtual livestream.

This year, we'll start off with some big-picture reflections drawing on the wisdom of the audience (you!) in conversation with leaders from across the sector.

Throughout the day, we'll take a deeper dive into timely topics that we are all navigating, like delivering trauma-informed care and facilitating climate emergency preparedness.

Register and learn more at www.alzheimer.ca/ns/conference

Whether in person or online, we look forward to seeing you this fall!

2023 Conference Program

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34th Annual Conference
Weaving Connections
in Dementia Care
Sponsored by **Shannex**

7:45 AM Doors Open

8:30 AM Opening Remarks
The Honourable Barbara Adams, Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care

8:45 AM Sector Reflections: Stitching Strategies for Dementia Care's Future
Kyle Richardson, Nursing Homes of Nova Scotia Association
Erin McNeil, Nova Scotia Health Continuing Care

10:00 AM Break - Symphony Nova Scotia Quartet

10:20 AM Trauma-Informed Approaches for Dementia
Norma Gould, We'koqma'q Mental Health and Addictions Services

11:20 AM Stronger than Patchwork: Rural Perspectives in Dementia Care
Janet Cochran & Suzanne Sheppard, Seniors' Community Health Team, South Shore
Dawn Thomas, Seniors' Safety Program, Digby County

12:20 PM Meet the ASNS Student Research Award Recipients

12:30 PM Lunch & Exhibits

1:30 PM Promising Practices Showcase
Dementia Friendly Memory Collection: Trecia Schell, Pictou-Antigonish Regional Library
Caring and Sharing Family Group: Cynthia Marble, Parkstone Enhance Care
Therapeutic Nursery: M  lissa Martin, Ocean View

2:30 PM Strategies to Foster Climate Resilience Among People Living with Dementia
Dr. Jennifer Baumbusch, University of British Columbia

3:20 PM Break - Weaving in Wellness: Movement with Sylvia Colley Ewing

3:40 PM Still Kissing the Joy as it Flies
Sheree Fitch & Gilles Plante
Interviewed by Costas Halavrezos, former CBC Radio Host

4:10 PM Closing Remarks

Memory Kits - In Partnership with Halifax Public Libraries

We're excited to partner with the Halifax Public Libraries on the creation of Memory Kits, which will be available to loan from any Halifax library.

Memory Kits include activities that people living with dementia may find engaging and that can be adapted as abilities change. The items in the Memory Kits aim to evoke memories, spark conversations, and create opportunities for meaningful engagement.



Create Your Own Memory Kit

While Memory Kits are currently in high demand, you can always create your own!

To start, find a container – a shoe box, Tupperware, an old purse, an unused drawer, a reusable bag – that you have on hand or that might be relevant or meaningful to the person living with dementia. You can decorate or personalize the container if you like.

Add items with meaning to the kit that are significant for the person with dementia. Involve the person with dementia as they are able. Consider favourite hobbies, work or career related items, special events, places they've been or always wanted to go, photos, postcards, letters or books.

Kits could contain:

- An adult picture or photo book
- A DVD of a television series
- A jigsaw puzzle
- A book of short stories or poems
- A feature film that can be enjoyed by all ages
- A game that can be enjoyed together
- A game that can be enjoyed individually

Memory Kits can be centered around a theme, such as movie stars, fashion, cooking or cars, with related books, objects, DVDs and games that stimulate memories or they can be a collection of engaging activities such as brain teasers, word puzzles, jigsaws, dominos or a deck of cards. **It's up to you!**

You may have items around the house and many can be found at a dollar store, department stores and online. Large print books, audio books, DVDs, CDs and movies can be borrowed from libraries. Song lists are available on YouTube, Spotify or other online resources.

Memory Kit contents can be adapted over time to keep interest high and keep pace with changes that come as dementia progresses.

Why are activities important?

Activities allow all of us to express ourselves through different means, fulfilling the need for cognitive, social, physical and emotional stimulation, which we also know is important for brain health. Activities provide a sense of accomplishment and a sense of being able to contribute, which is important for everyone, including people living with dementia.

As dementia progresses, a person's ability to participate in certain activities will change. Adapting activities to their changing abilities and remaining flexible are key to helping a person living with dementia remain engaged in a variety of activities that are meaningful to them. These kits are a great tool for home care and respite workers as well as friends and family members.

For more information about meaningful activities or suggestions, connect with us by phone at 1-800-611-6345 or email alzheimer@asns.ca.



InfoLine is now Dementia Helpline

In May of 2022, we recognized 20 years of our InfoLine service. InfoLine started as a group of dedicated volunteers providing information over the phone to people affected by Alzheimer's disease. Nova Scotians needed someone to turn to for support navigating the dementia journey, and they still need that today.

We've grown to over 7 full time InfoLine staff, with professional designations ranging from Registered Social Workers to Certified Recreation Therapists, to Registered Counselling Therapists. This growing team is now able to respond to more calls and are providing more complex support than ever before.

We've also expanded our scope over the years, supporting clients with all types of dementia, not just Alzheimer's disease. It's no longer just a phone service – we support clients over email, Zoom and with in-person visits. It's time for a new name that better represents our service: Dementia Helpline.

The Dementia Helpline will be the same knowledgeable and professional service that our clients have grown accustomed to and will continue to support the new clients that connect with us each day. Our hope is that this new name will be a clear signal that we support Nova Scotians experiencing all types of dementia and will better represent support they receive.

The Dementia Helpline provides:

- Help navigating the dementia journey
- Registration for Alzheimer Society programs
- Educational materials (print or online)
- Ongoing, individualized support
- Connection to community-based services
- Tips and strategies for living well

If you need support from our Dementia Helpline, call us toll-free (within Nova Scotia) at 1-800-611-6345.

Did you know?



On any given day we have 3 staff responding to inquiries.

Last year, we made over 4,000 client contacts.

Questions about dementia?

We are here to help.



The province-wide Dementia Helpline is a confidential service provided by a team of knowledgeable and caring staff.

The Dementia Helpline provides:

- Help navigating the dementia journey
- Ongoing individualized support
- Registration for Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia programs
- Connection to community-based services
- Culturally diverse materials in multiple languages (print or online)
- Information about:
 - Any type of dementia
 - Maintaining brain health
 - Getting a diagnosis
 - Planning for the future
 - Maintaining independence
 - Tips and strategies for living well

Dementia Helpline
1-800-611-6345

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Dear reader,

My name is Charles MacKenzie, and I have recently joined the team at the Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia as Director of Philanthropy. I'm so excited to be joining such an important cause and helping to ensure that all Nova Scotians affected by dementia are empowered thorough timely, accessible, and culturally specific care, support, information and services, no matter where they live or how they identify.

This is an exciting time for our organization. With new strategic intentions in hand, we're ready to make changes in how we promote brain health and support our clients.

Our shared future is outlined in a cutting-edge national report from the Alzheimer Society of Canada, **the Landmark Study**. According to this study, Canada is facing an exponential increase in the number of people living with dementia. **With the number of people living with dementia expected to nearly double in Nova Scotia by 2050, our province is not ready.**

In addition to the new data, the Landmark Study also shows us how we can potentially avoid these major increases, and maybe even reduce the incidence of dementia across Canada. Knowing this, we know that we need to do more to better support Nova Scotians affected by dementia.

We can't do it alone. We need continued collaboration, dedicated volunteers, and support from individuals like you. That's why I'm asking you to support out work by making a donation to the Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia today. You can make a secure online donation at alzheimer.ca/ns/donate, or use the reply form on the next page.

Your support today directly provides hope for tomorrow for all Nova Scotians affected by dementia.



Charles MacKenzie, M.A., CFRE

Director of Philanthropy, Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia

Make a Donation

Name: _____

Full mailing address: _____

Yes! You can count on me to help ensure that caregivers, family members, and those living with dementia get the support they need.

I would like to support the Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia with a **one time** gift of:

☐ \$20 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$ _____

OR

I would like to support the Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia with a **monthly** gift of:

☐ \$10 ☐ \$20 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$ _____

You can stop your monthly gift at anytime by contacting us by phone or email.

PAYMENT INFORMATION:

☐ I have enclosed a cheque payable to the Alzheimer Socieity of Nova Scotia

OR

☐ Please charge my donation to my: ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ AMEX

Cardholder name: _____

Card number: _____

Expiry: ____/____ CVC: _____

Cardholder signature: _____

☐ I prefer to receive my official tax receipt by email to help reduce administrative costs.
My email address is: _____

Thank you! Please return to: **Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia**
112-2719 Gladstone St.
Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3K 4W6

You can also make your secure online donation at alzheimer.ca/ns/donate.

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902-422-7961 or 1-800-611-6345 (toll free within NS)

