

PANEL HIGHLIGHT



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Decoding Behaviour Changes:
Building Skills, Confidence and Connection

Client profile:

Mrs. Thompson is an 82-year-old woman living with her husband. She was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease five years ago. Mrs. Thompson is generally pleasant and enjoys sitting by the window watching the birds. She responds best to familiar voices and routines. She has a daughter who visits regularly.



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SPEAKER HIGHLIGHT

Living Well, Living Fully: Everyday Strategies for Independence & Joy in Dementia



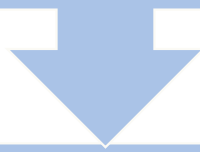
Tabatha Biggar
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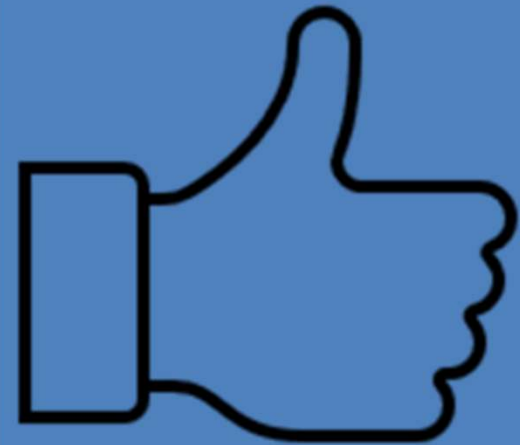
Sara Abu Itham
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DISCLOSURE

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**Presented by
Tabatha
Biggar**

**TDW, CDCP, Dementiability &
GPA Trainer and PAC certified
coach**

What is DementiAbility?

www.DEMENTIABILITY.com



Changing the face of dementia...one step at a time.

THE DementiAbility Methods

Focusing on
ENABLING - ENGAGING
- EXPOSING POTENTIAL -
ENRICHING LIVES

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By: Gail Elliot
Gerontologist & Dementia Specialist



This person-centered approach to dementia care that focuses on:

- *enhancing the lives of individuals living with dementia**
- *emphasizing their retained abilities rather than their losses.**

Developed by Gail Elliot, a gerontologist and dementia specialist, the method is grounded in the belief that people with dementia can still experience:

- *joy**
- *purpose**
- *dignity**

if supported in the right environment.

Every person
is different
Every brain is
different
Every life
story is
different



If you know one
person with dementia
– you know one
person with dementia

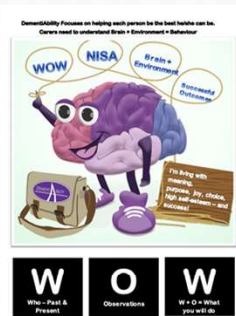
THE JOURNEY IS UNIQUE: INDIVIDUALITY IN DEMENTIA

Recognizing the uniqueness of each journey allows for:

- ✓ **Compassionate care**
- ✓ **Empowerment of the individual**
- ✓ **Respect for dignity and autonomy**



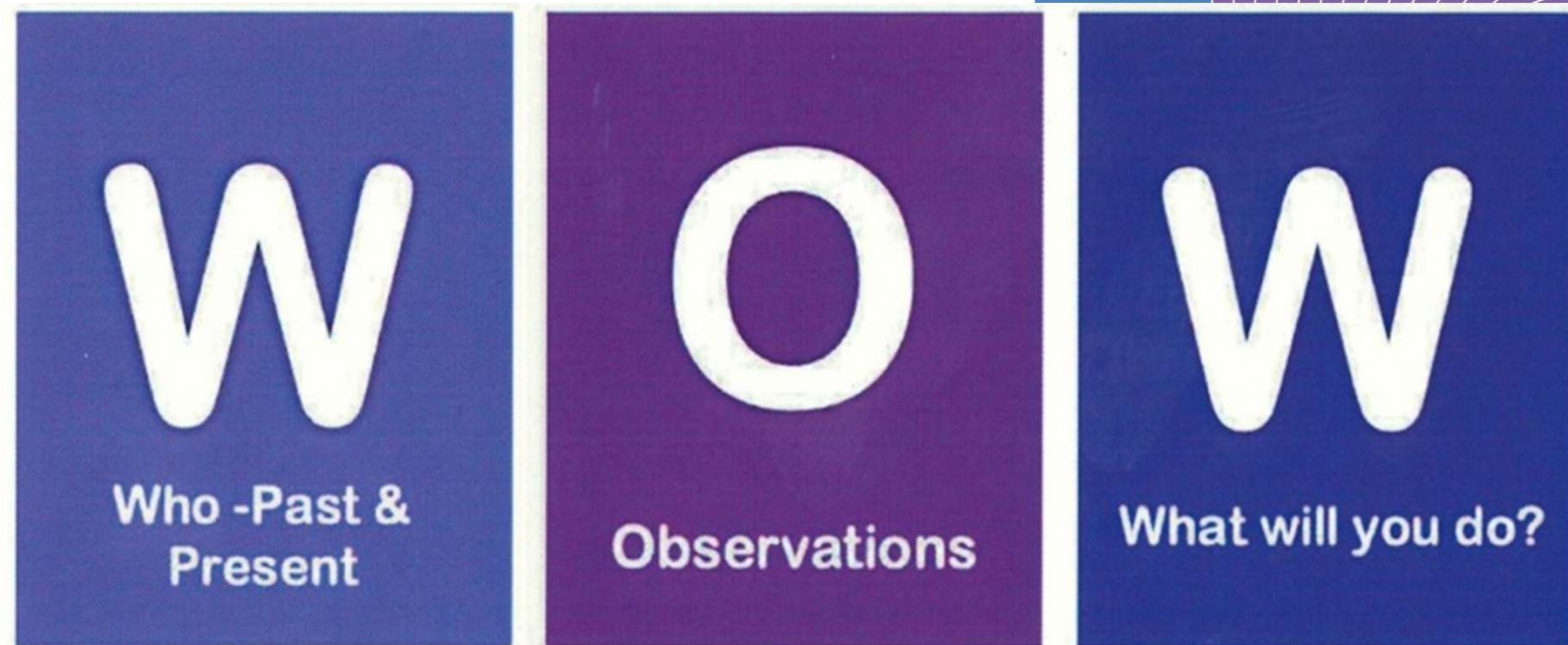
MATCHING TASKS TO ABILITIES



- ➡ WOW
- ➡ NISA
- ➡ ALL ABOUT ME
- ➡ WHAT MORE DO I NEED TO KNOW?

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The **WOW Model** from **DementiAbility Methods™** is a practical framework designed to help caregivers and support teams understand and respond to the unique needs of individuals living with dementia. It guides person-centered care by encouraging thoughtful observation and action based on the person's life story, behaviors, and current abilities.



NISA

- ✓ **Needs:** Treat the treatable, address basic needs, address needs for **LOVE** and **CONNECTION**
- ✓ **Interests:** What **DID** they enjoy? What **DO** they currently enjoy?
- ✓ **Skills:** What did this person do well in the **PAST**?
- ✓ **Abilities:** What is the person able to do **NOW**? What can be adapted so their skill meets the current ability?



ALL ABOUT ME

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- ✓ The Early Years : Birthplace, family, childhood memories, school life
- ✓ The Adult Years : First love, career, favorite activities, special celebrations
- ✓ Likes & Dislikes: Foods, pets, hobbies, music, movies, places
- ✓ Daily Life: Routines, how you spend free time, things that bring joy
- ✓ Things I Want You to Know: Personal values, quirks, and what makes you “you”



This isn't just a memory aid—it's a bridge. It helps caregivers, family, and staff understand the person behind the diagnosis. It promotes dignity, empathy, and meaningful engagement.

BE A DEMENTIA DETECTIVE FOR YOUR LOVED ONE



- Collect information about your loved one
- Look for the clues
- Focus on **CURRENT** observations
- Make important connections between the facts from both the present and past with the objective of finding solutions

FOCUS ON ABILITIES NOT LOSSES

DementiAbility encourages caregivers to identify and support the individual's preserved skills



Abilities: Don't
assume decline!
Aim to enhance
& maximize
abilities.

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Maintain/Enhance abilities until the end!





**CAN YOU HELP ME DO THE
LAUNDRY?**

USES ENVIRONMENTAL CUES TO SUPPORT INDEPENDENCE

Environmental cues can be incredibly powerful tools in supporting people living with dementia. These cues help compensate for memory loss, reduce confusion, and promote independence by making surroundings more intuitive and familiar.

SET THEM UP FOR SUCCESS GETTING DRESSED



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Sit in chair.



Put on underwear.



Put on bra.



Put on skirt.



Put on Blouse.



Put on Stockings.



USE ENVIRONMENTAL MODIFICATIONS TO SUPPORT REMAINING ABILITIES

Environmental modifications are a powerful way to **support the remaining abilities** of individuals living with dementia. Rather than focusing on what's lost, these adaptations aim to **enhance what still works**—cognition, mobility, sensory perception, and emotional connection—by creating surroundings that are intuitive, safe, and empowering.



SET THEM UP FOR SUCCESS AT MEALTIME

Color contrast & adaptations



Visual Menus



ENCOURAGE ACTIVITIES THAT HAVE MEANING AND PURPOSE

Engaging people with dementia in meaningful and purposeful activities is essential for enhancing their quality of life, maintaining cognitive function, and promoting emotional well-being.

WHAT MAKES ME HAPPY?

Occupations Tasks:
Let's clean the Kitchen!



Holiday Prep!



Pet Therapy

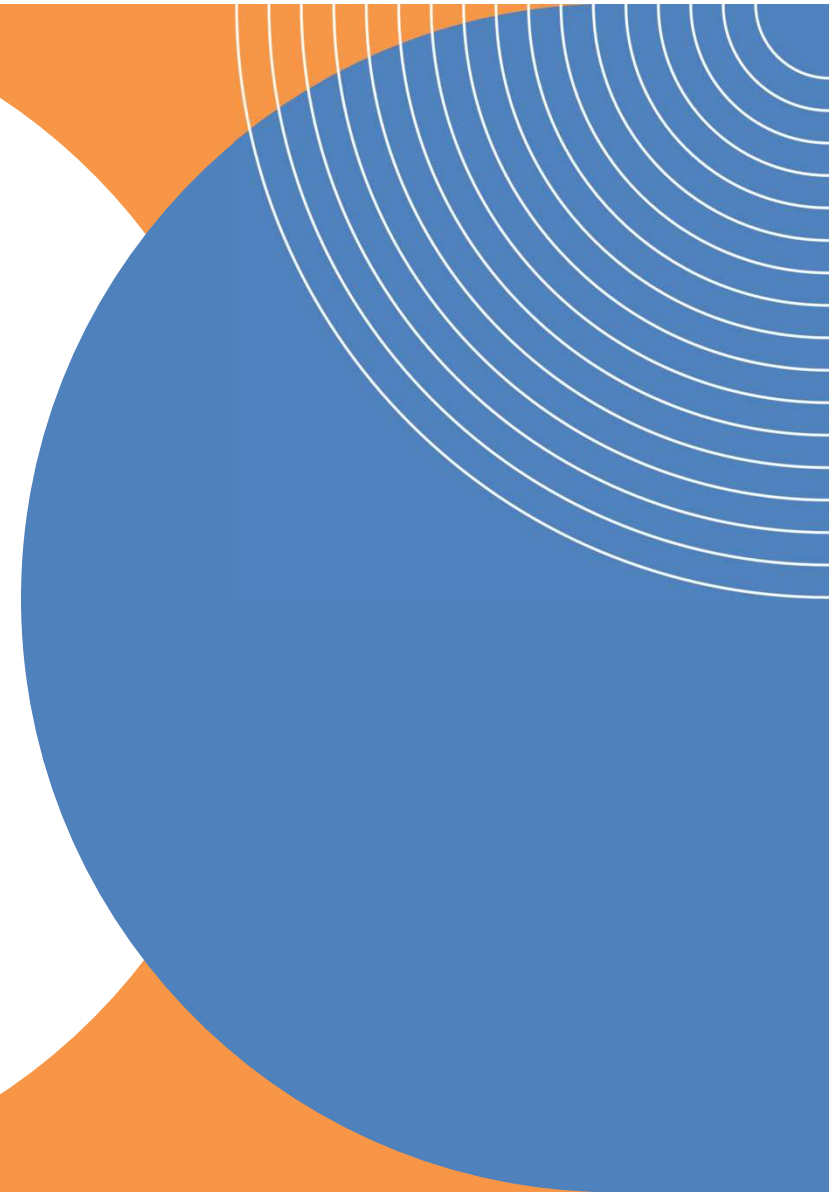


**ENCOURAGE ACTIVITIES
THAT HAVE MEANING AND
PURPOSE**

DEMENTIABILITY: KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Person-Centered Approach** Focuses on the strengths, preferences, and life story of each individual living with dementia.
- **Meaningful Engagement** Activities are designed to stimulate cognitive function, promote independence, and enhance quality of life.
- **Environment Matters** Optimizing physical and social environments to support memory, orientation, and comfort.
- **Evidence-Informed Practices** Grounded in research and best practices to improve outcomes in dementia care.
- **Empowering Care Teams** Training and tools that equip caregivers to deliver compassionate, effective support.

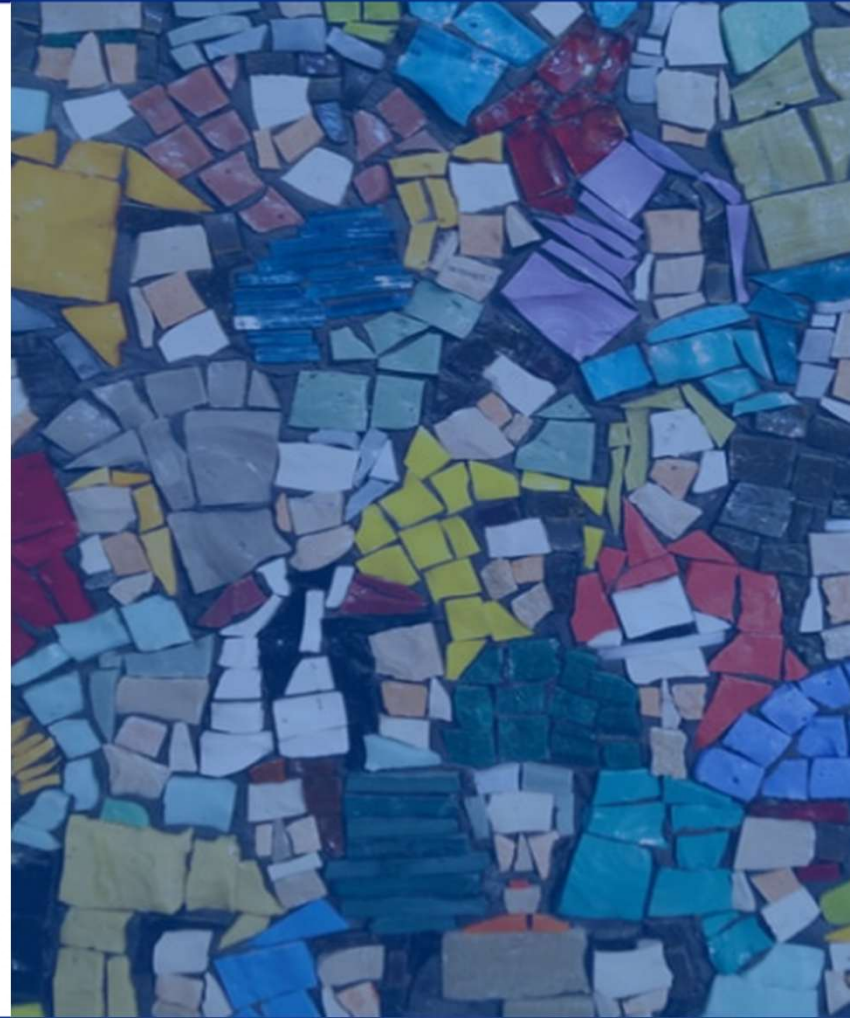
**When we understand the
person behind the
dementia, we unlock the
potential for connection,
dignity, and joy.**



September 17, 2025

Living Well with Dementia

Presented by: Sara Abu Itham
Alzheimer Society of PEI
Support Services Coordinator





Persons Living with Dementia

People living with dementia must be viewed first and foremost as individuals with unique attributes, personal values and life history

What Dementia is NOT...

A mental illness

A normal part of aging

Something a person can control

The same for every person

Finding Meaning & Purpose



Use your skills in new and familiar roles



Surround yourself with positive people, objects and images



Ask “What can I do or change to keep going?”



Remember who YOU are

What are you most proud of?

What stories or songs bring you joy?

YOU are the expert!

Self-Talk

- How we talk to ourself and others matters

Instead of..	Try...
"I can't do anything anymore"	"I can't cook a full meal anymore, but I can still prepare vegetables"
"Things will never get better"	"Today was a bad day"
"I shouldn't have answered the phone. I can never remember anyone's name"	"Dementia is causing me to forget names. When I answer the phone, I will ask who is calling"

Mindfulness



Change is inevitable



Focus on moments of joy



Be grateful for current opportunities

Today, I can...

Today, I enjoyed...



Honouring Emotions

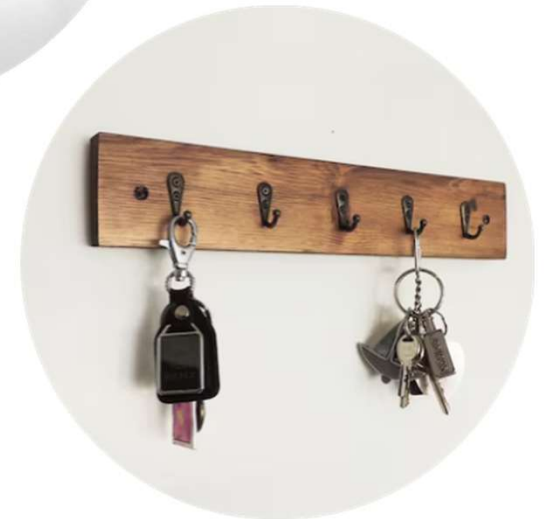
- . Common emotions include shock, denial, anger/frustration, fear, grief and acceptance
- . Give yourself time and space to feel emotions
- . Find meaningful ways to express emotion

You cannot change the direction of the wind, but you can adjust your sails

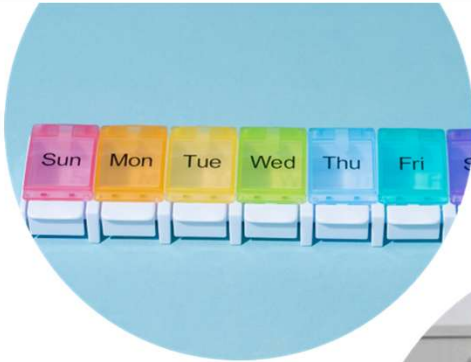
- Do one thing at a time
- Follow routines
- Avoid too much stimulation
- Accept that you will forget things
- Focus on what you can do
- Give yourself lots of time
- Set yourself up for success – time and place matter



- Create lists
- Use clocks and watches with large, digital numbers
- Update calendar in central area
- Keep a notepad and pen accessible
- Use a white board to communicate important information



Memory Tips & Tricks



- Set timers and alarms
- Keep things simple; reduce clutter
- Use a dispenser for medications
- Label items as needed
- Make duplicates of important items and assign a designated place (i.e. keys, glasses)



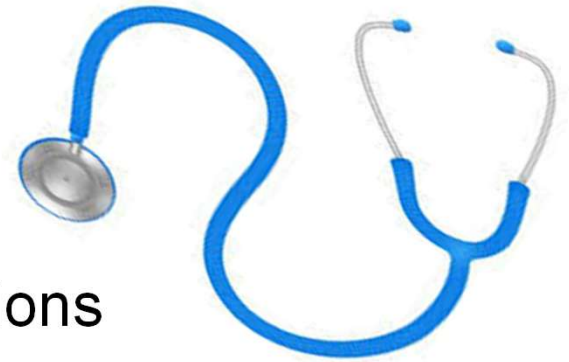
Reducing the Risk of Getting Lost



- . Always carry identification
- . Walk or drive in safe and familiar places
- . Go with a friend or family member
- . Avoid pushing limits
- . Stop to breathe and ask for help
- . Consider using technology

Be prepared for Doctor appointments

- Track symptoms
- Ask questions
- Voice your concerns
- Invite trusted family/friend to attend with you
- Record the information
- Get regular checkups for ALL medical conditions



Advocate for the care you deserve!

Keep a
sense of
humor

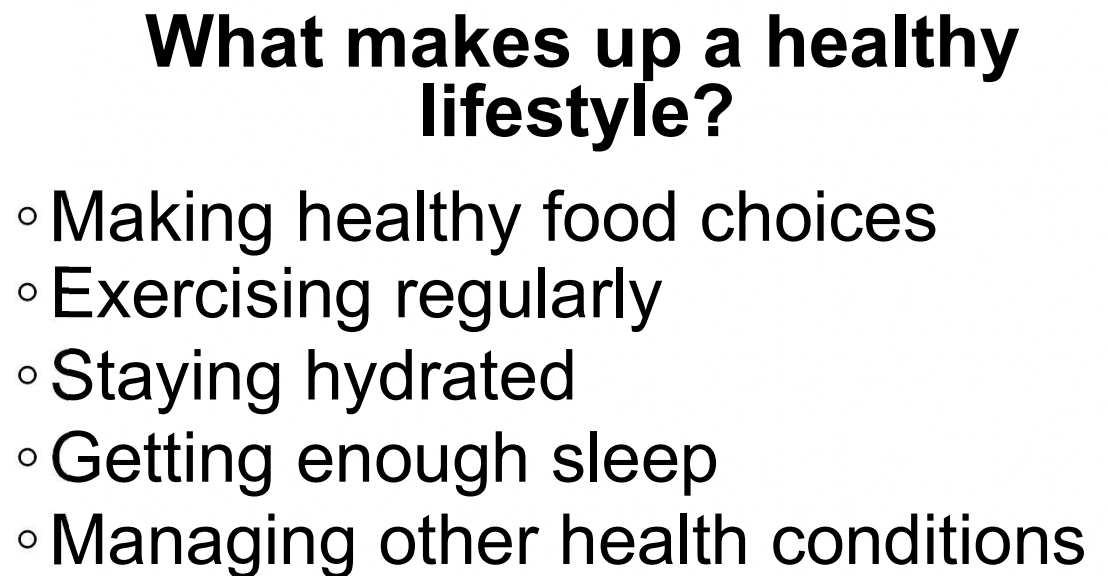


Make peace
with
imperfection

Don't forget to have fun - smile, laugh and sing!

1. Live a healthy lifestyle
2. Stay socially connected
3. Challenge your brain
4. Reduce stress
5. Protect your head





Tips for staying socially active

- 1. Make the most of your daily opportunities to socialize**
- 2. Volunteer or join a community group**
- 3. Combine social interaction with an activity**
- 4. Maintain old friendships and make new ones**

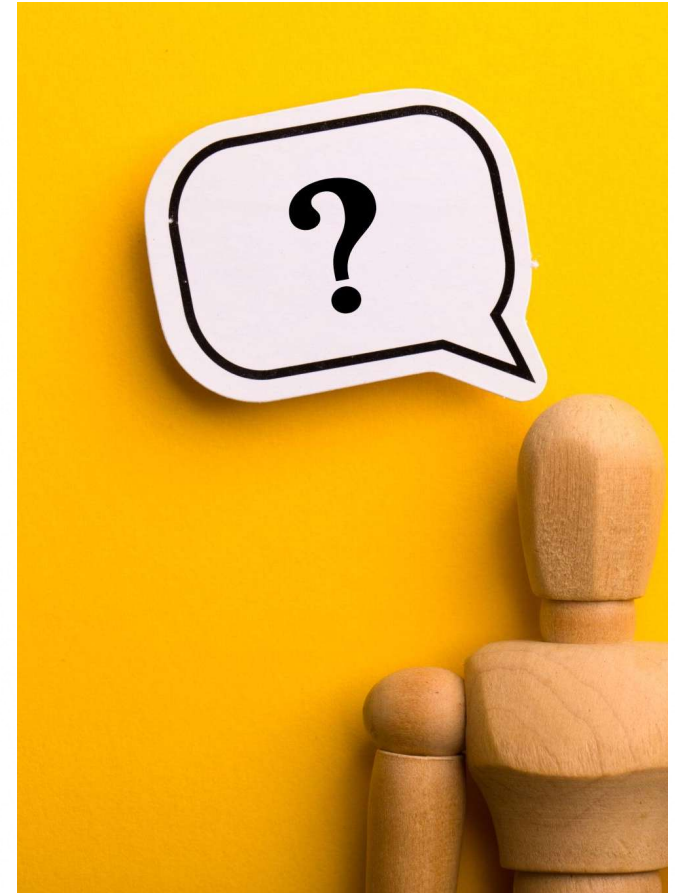
Community
Changes
Everything



Benefits	Fears
. Social & emotional support . Relief of others knowing . Safety in the home . Encourages other to learn about dementia	. Stigma . Lack of validation . Changes in family dynamics . The unknown

Talking about the Diagnosis

- Find a private, quiet space
- Start with someone you trust the most
- Tell them only what they need to know
- Consider writing your thoughts
- Ask other trusted friends or family



Société Alzheimer Society

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

I have an illness that causes memory loss and confusion.

I like to be independent but I may need
your help and understanding.

You can help me by knowing unusual behaviour
is due to my illness; asking me what you can do to
assist me and treating me with patience and dignity.

Building a circle of support

1. Notice and pinpoint what's causing stress
2. Name the kind of help that would make a difference
3. Learn about options, discuss with others
4. Accept help – **may not always be easy but it is necessary!**

Community Support Services



- Accessible transportation options
- Home Care
- Geriatric Program
- Alzheimer Society of PEI
- Hospice PEI
- Community Legal Information
- Seniors Navigator/Patient Navigators
- 211
- And many more!

Programs

First Link®

Volunteer Companion
Program

Thrive & Care
Therapy Program

Social Activities

Services

Support Groups

Supportive Counselling

Family Consultations

Resources

Education

First Link Learning Series

Learning Series

For people with dementia, their families & friends

First Steps
Next Steps for Families
Care Essentials
Options for Care
Care in the later stages

Individual and family support looks different for each client

- Emotional support
- Access to reliable information and resources
- Guidance on symptom progression, treatment options, changes in communication and behaviour.
- Navigation to available services in the health care and community resources sectors.



Living with Changes in Thinking and Memory: Support Circle

- Provides space to connect and share experiences with others on a similar journey
- Learn practical strategies for living well with dementia

Living with mild cognitive impairment or early stage dementia?

Join our support group!

- Charlottetown



AlzheimerSociety
PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND





Volunteer Companion Program

A one-on-one visiting program for individuals with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias.

- Meaningful companionship
- Conversation and activities at home or in the community
- Cognitive stimulation
- Respite for the care partner

Walking Groups & Dementia-Friendly Activities

- ✓ For seniors
- ✓ Inclusive for persons living with MCI, a diagnosis of Alzheimer's or another dementia



“I wish I knew about you sooner”

**Support
Changes
Everything**



Thank you for
joining us
See you next year!



Alzheimer Society of PEI
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