



We hope you are keeping well during what is a time of many challenges for many in our community. While many in-person activities have been stopped, reduced or adapted, we know that connection is more important than ever. This bulletin highlights the ways we continue to provide support and education. Read on for stories about how COVID-19 is having an impact on people living with dementia, self-care tips, messages from our volunteers and upcoming dementia events, including webinars, tele-support groups and Voices in Motion sing-alongs.

The First Link® Dementia Helpline can help!

We have permanently extended the First Link® Dementia Helpline hours until 8 p.m., Monday to Friday, to make the service available into the evening.

In addition to crucial emotional support and a listening ear, access information about living with dementia during COVID-19 including practical strategies on a variety of topics, such as behavioural and communication challenges. Frequently asked questions that we can support you with include:

- Support following a recent diagnosis.
- Education about the disease and how family members can support a person living with dementia.
- Advice for caregivers who are observing that behaviours or care needs are becoming more complex (for example, information about hallucinations or help with personal care).
- Communication strategies, including guidance on how to deal with questions around the pandemic.
- Advice and support for caregivers feeling stressed, overwhelmed or burnt out.

Questions about dementia or memory loss?



First Link®
DEMENTIA HELPLINE

English	1-800-936-6033 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.
Cantonese and Mandarin	1-833-674-5007 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Punjabi	1-833-674-5003 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

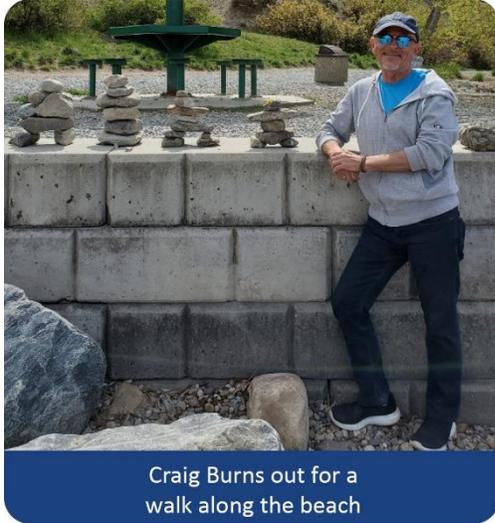
Dementia in the days of COVID-19

During this time of increased isolation due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many people living with dementia and the people who care for them are disconnected from support networks and facing unexpected challenges. It is the Alzheimer Society of B.C.'s mission to ensure that no one walks alone on the dementia journey. Caregivers, people living with dementia and volunteers have shared their everyday challenges, successes and words of encouragement as a part of our "Dementia in the days of COVID-19" series. We have included a sample of the stories below, and the full series is available on our website at: alzbc.org/COVID-stories.

Craig Burns' story

Keeping socially engaged and physically active are keys to maintaining a healthy lifestyle for anyone – but for people living with dementia like Craig, they're a lifeline.

"I deal with depression with Alzheimer's and this whole scenario is causing quite a bit of anxiety," Craig says. "I've done a bunch of projects around the home, but I've run out of things to do."



Craig Burns out for a walk along the beach

Much of his volunteer work continues remotely, but for someone living with dementia on their own, meetings on a screen are no replacement for human contact – and often more challenging because of added technical issues. Craig tries to keep proactive with virtual or distanced visits with friends and family. His advice for others living alone during the pandemic is nothing new, he says, but valuable just the same:

“Maintain a regular pattern,” he says. “Don’t go wild on trying to find new things, but if something new comes up, try it.”

While he waits for social gatherings to return, the gym to open up, the support group to resume, Craig is walking and reflecting a lot these days. He takes the trails around Okanagan Lake and buys coffee from newly-made friends at one of the few businesses still open. Sometimes he’ll sit at the park where other people are in sight, alongside osprey and otters at the bird sanctuary.

“I’ve rediscovered the beauty of nature,” Craig says. “The beauty of birds singing, the beauty of spring and the blossoms coming out.” To read the full story, visit: alzbc.org/craigs-story.

Trudy Kotzian’s story

Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, the activities that Trudy, who cares for her husband Klaus, relied on stopped, leaving Trudy struggling to provide care on her own and Klaus struggling to understand why his world has changed. “Why is the shopping centre closed?” Trudy says, recounting the list of daily questions. “Why does no one come to visit? Why was our trip cancelled? Why can’t I hug you? Why do we have to stand so far apart from one another? But most of all, the question I hear over and over again is: when can I go to the barber? To him, in his now so cocooned life, having a haircut is very important and I do not dare to try to do it for him.”

Trudy misses the days when Klaus would attend an adult day program or when a good friend would take him out for lunch and a game of pool. Trudy has welcomed phone calls during the pandemic, but they’re no replacement for seeing someone smile or giving them a hug. Trying to do the best is the best thing to do, she says, but it isn’t easy.

“By night-time,” Trudy says, “I am exhausted from answering the repeated questions that come my way all day long. Nice thing is, that a good sleep replenishes the lost energy and the lovely sunny mornings I wake up to every day make me thankful again for the life I have, and the life that I can still share with my husband.” To read the full story, visit: alzbc.org/trudys-story.



Klaus and Trudy Kotzian

Self-care during the days of COVID-19

Self-care is vital and continues to be even more important during these heightened times of stress. We have developed new resources and webinars on a range of topics including activity ideas, understanding behaviour and self-care, which are available online at alzbc.org/COVID-19.

We've included some of our self-care tips below. We hope that you are about to take a moment to read these and that you find them valuable:

1. **Try to stay positive – the current situation is temporary.** Think about the positive aspects of your life. Keep a list of the things you are grateful for and use it to remind yourself of these good things when you are feeling sad, lonely or overwhelmed.
2. **Make back-up plans.** Whether you are living with dementia or are a caregiver, talk to family members or friends and create a plan for what to do if you or someone in your family becomes ill. In times of crisis, it is reassuring to know there is a back-up plan. This can lessen the worry about an uncertain future.
3. **Build and write down a new routine.** A regular and predictable daily routine can be incredibly beneficial. This includes maintaining a consistent bedtime, eating meals at regular times and making sure to schedule physical activity, rest times, social time and purposeful activities into each day.
4. **Avoid information overload.** Limit your news to reputable sources and consider setting a time limit or schedule times into your daily routine to get caught up on the news.
5. **Stay connected.** Regular phone calls or visits over Skype can help you to maintain the feeling of being connected to others.
6. **Get support for yourself.** Identify a trusted family member or friend who can be there for you when you are feeling overwhelmed, frustrated or tired and need a listening ear. Sometimes just knowing there is someone you can call for support is enough to boost your resilience.

Messages of support from our volunteers



“What I would like to say to the group of caregivers that I meet with monthly is to stay strong, stay safe, make sure you practice self-care more now than ever. I think of you often and look forward to connecting with you all!”

- Sandra Hentzen, caregiver support group facilitator



“If I was able to tell our group members anything, it would be: you are courageous, caring and show amazing strength. I would thank them for letting me catch a glimpse into their journey.”

- Cheryl MacDonald, caregiver and early-stage support group facilitator



“Something I've found myself thinking lately is that tough times do not last, but tough people do. The times we are going through are much like the journey of dementia; we don't know what exactly is going to happen, but we can all learn ways to adapt our routines, connect in

new ways and make it through these strange and challenging times together.

Stay safe, stay strong and stay healthy. I look forward to when I get to reconnect with the community again soon.”

- Bridget Beggs, education volunteer

Our upcoming webinars can connect you with support and knowledge from anywhere

We have increased the frequency of our dementia education webinars, offering them weekly instead of monthly. The webinars are free to access and provide an opportunity each week to learn and have your questions answered by our specialist staff.

Registration for our upcoming webinars, as well as the complete archive of recorded videos from previous webinars, is available on our website at alzbc.org/webinars.



Learn about dementia from anywhere by participating in our live webinars

Webinar	Date
Delusions, hallucinations and visual mistakes: Explore strategies for responding to delusions, hallucinations and visual mistakes caused by dementia.	Wednesday, June 24 2 p.m. (45 minutes)
Living safely with dementia: Explore how people living with dementia and their families can live safely in the community.	Wednesday, July 8 2 p.m. (60 minutes)
Mindfulness practice as a skill for self-care through the care partnering experience: Join Dr. Elisabeth Drance for a hands-on introduction to mindfulness practice, and the benefits to you as a care partner and the person you are supporting.	Wednesday, July 15 2 p.m. (60 minutes)
Caregiving during COVID-19: An overview of tips and strategies for families coping with dementia-related challenges that may arise because of COVID-19.	Wednesday, July 22 2 p.m. (60 minutes)
Self-compassion: The “power tool” on the dementia journey: Join Dr. Elisabeth Drance to explore the concept of self-compassion and practice skills to help with dementia care partnering.	Wednesday, August 5 2 p.m. (60 minutes)
Understanding dementia: Learn how dementia affects a person’s brain and behaviour, as well as the disease's impact on family.	Wednesday, August 12 2 p.m. (60 minutes)
Understanding communication: Explore how communication is affected by dementia and learn effective communication strategies.	Wednesday, August 19 2 p.m. (60 minutes)
Understanding behaviour: Learn practical strategies to respond to the person living with dementia in supportive ways.	Wednesday, August 26 2 p.m. (60 minutes)
Building caregiver resiliency: Strategies to positively manage caregiver stress and build resilience. For caregivers.	Wednesday, September 2 2 p.m. (45 minutes)
Activities to do at home: The benefits of meaningful home-based activities for families affected by dementia.	Wednesday, September 9 2 p.m. (60 minutes)

Punjabi webinars

We are pleased to introduce our new webinars in Punjabi. The video series “Dementia friends” and “Getting to know dementia” are available online now at alzbc.org/punjabi-webinars, with more videos to be added over the coming months. For further information in Punjabi, available Monday to Friday between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., call the First Link® Dementia Helpline’s South Asian support line at 1-833-674-5003.



Connect with other caregivers by phone through our tele-support groups

The Society is rolling out tele-support groups across the province. If you are interested in participating in a tele-support group, please call the First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-800-936-6033 for more information.

Sing-along Tuesdays from Voices in Motion

Voices in Motion is an intergenerational choir made up of people affected by dementia and high school students. If you are looking for a feel-good activity, join their live "Sing-along Tuesdays" weekly at 1 p.m. Come and enjoy this 45-minute virtual get-together and forward this to others to come and sing together. Songs include "Golden Oldies" as well as favourites that you can request, which are posted the day before so participants can have the words ready ahead of time. Tune in and watch previous recordings on the choir's Facebook page: [@VoicesInMotionChoirs](https://www.facebook.com/VoicesInMotionChoirs)

Survey invitation: Tell us how COVID-19 has affected you

We are continuously striving to provide the best support possible for people affected by dementia and we rely on feedback from clients, care partners, health-care providers and members of the public to do so. Working with researchers at UBC, we're seeking input via an anonymous survey to hear from people living

with dementia and caregivers about how COVID-19 has affected them.

By taking 15 minutes of your time to complete the survey, you will help us understand how we can best meet people's support needs. To take the survey, visit: <http://bit.ly/firstlinkcovid>.

Connect to First Link® by contacting a Resource Centre near you

Vancouver Coastal

Vancouver and Richmond

Phone: 604-675-5150

Phone (Chinese): 604-687-8299

Email: info.vancouver@alzheimercbc.org

Email (Chinese):

info.chinese@alzheimercbc.org

North Shore & Sunshine Coast

Phone: 604-984-8348 OR 604-984-8347

Toll-free: 1-866-984-8348 OR 1-855-984-8347

Email: info.northshore@alzheimercbc.org

Fraser Region

North Fraser

Phone: 604-298-0780

Email: info.northfraser@alzheimercbc.org

South Fraser

Phone: 604-449-5000

Email: info.southfraser@alzheimercbc.org

East Fraser

Phone (Abbotsford & Mission): 604-859-3889

Phone (Chilliwack & Hope): 604-702-4603

Email: info.southfraser@alzheimercbc.org

Vancouver Island

North & Central Vancouver Island

Phone: 250-734-4140

Toll-free: 1-800-462-2833 (Island only)

Email: info.nanaimo@alzheimercbc.org

Greater Victoria

Phone: 250-382-2052

Email: info.victoria@alzheimercbc.org

Northern Region

North Interior, Skeena and Peace

Phone: 250-564-7533

Toll-free: 1-866-564-7533

Email: info.princegeorge@alzheimercbc.org

Interior Region

Central Interior

Phone: 250-377-8200

Email: info.kamloops@alzheimercbc.org

North & Central Okanagan

Phone: 250-860-0305

Toll-free: 1-800-634-3399

Email: info.kelowna@alzheimercbc.org

South Okanagan & Similkameen

Phone: 250-493-8182

Toll-free: 1-888-318-1122

Email: info.penticton@alzheimercbc.org

West Kootenay

Phone: 778-774-2133

Toll-free: 1-855-301-6742

Email: info.westkootenay@alzheimercbc.org

East Kootenay

Phone: 778-761-2011 or 778-774-2133

Toll-free: 1-833-426-0534

Email: info.eastkootenay@alzheimercbc.org

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