

Dealing with Dementia: Life Beyond Diagnosis



On Thursday September 4, 2014, in collaboration with CIHR, the Parkinson Society of Canada, and the Alzheimer Society of Canada proudly presented a Café Scientifique on Dealing with Dementia: Life Beyond Diagnosis.

This Café which was moderated by Scientific Director of CIHR's Institute of Aging, Dr. Yves Joanette, featured a panel of five participants. Each panel member had an opportunity to speak for 7 minutes followed by a 15 minute break and then a question and answer period.



Dr. Yves Joanette, CIHR Institute of Aging



Dr. Howard Chertkow is cognitive neurologist, clinician and researcher from the Lady Davis Institute in Montreal. Dr. Chertkow spoke about dementia and how it impacts individuals living with the disease as well as their caregivers, based on what he has observed within his practice and within his research.

Dr. Howard Chertkow, Lady Davis Institute, Montreal

Patricia Doucette is a former nurse and caregiver to her husband who lives with Parkinson's disease and dementia. Patricia expressed the challenges that she has faced in dealing with her husband's dementia including the management of the 55 pills that he takes daily, 45 of which are for Parkinson's disease. She also shared that her husband's experience using Aricept® has been quite helpful in treating his dementia.



Patricia Doucette, Caregiver to husband with Parkinson's and dementia



An RN from Bruyère Continuing Care, Carmen Rodrigue, provided tips on health, communication and social engagement for those living with dementia and their caregivers.

Carmen Rodrigue, RN, Bruyère Continuing Care

Ross Cleary, is a former attorney who practiced law for 30 years was diagnosed with mild cognitive impairment in April 2012 and now lives with dementia. Ross and his wife Sally have been married for 57 years. While he still manages the household bills, and is the primary driver within their home, the finances and investments which he was once able to handle on his own, now have to be done in consultation with their son who is a CA.



Ross Cleary, living with dementia



Sally Cleary, Caregiver

Sally Cleary, Ross' wife, candidly shared her experiences living as his caregiver. Sally expressed the hurt that has been associated with her husband's dementia where she misses the meaningful conversations that they were once able to share. She has been frustrated with having to remind Ross to do simple tasks over and over again, only to end up completing them on her own. Sally participated in the [First Link program](#) offered by the Alzheimer Society and encouraged others to do the same as she found it to be quite helpful.

Some thoughtful discussion resulted from the questions posed by the audience which included the following tips and recommendations that were shared by the panel:

- Dementia can be delayed by keeping cognitively active ie. playing games, puzzles.
- Listening to favourite music from the past or looking at old pictures can be helpful to those living with dementia.
- Do not force a person with dementia to remember details, instead offer gentle reminders. ie. setting up a calendar where the date is highlighted for the person to see each day.
- Those who are living with or who know someone seeking support with dementia are encouraged to contact your local [Alzheimer Society](#) today.