



The Empowered Caregiver

# Building Foundations of Caregiving

ALZHEIMER'S  ASSOCIATION®





## The Empowered Caregiver



### **Building Foundations of Caregiving**

Supporting Independence

Communicating Effectively

Responding to Dementia-Related Behaviors

Exploring Care and Support Services

# Caregivers in the United States



More than 6 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's. More than 11 million provide unpaid care.



Family members, friends or other unpaid caregivers provide the majority of the help to older adults.



Family members can have different caregiver roles. Some even help from far away.



Although 64% say caregiving is stressful, 92% say it is rewarding.



## **Person-Centered Approach to Care**

# Person-Centered Approach to Care

## What is it?

Person-centered care focuses on the individual and their specific needs. It involves using what you know about their likes, dislikes and abilities to give the best possible care.



# Person-Centered Approach to Care

## What are the benefits for the person living with dementia?

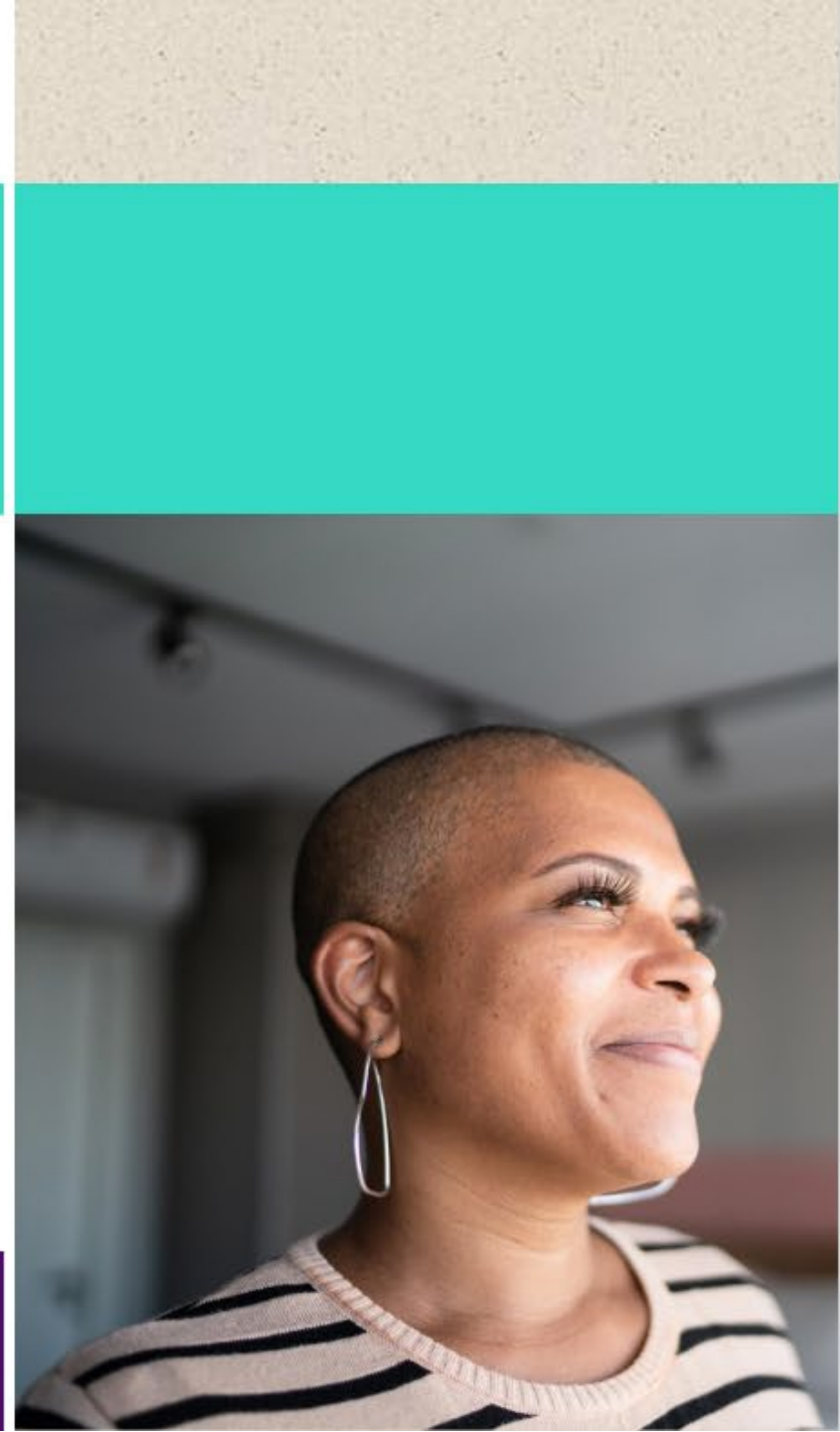
- Fewer dementia-related behaviors, which may lower the need for medication to treat these symptoms.
- Less boredom and feelings of helplessness.
- Lower levels of agitation.
- An increase in happiness and sense of well-being.



# Person-Centered Approach to Care

## What are the benefits for caregivers?

- More confidence in addressing dementia-related communication and behavior changes.
- Increased satisfaction in being a caregiver.
- Improved relationship with the person living with the disease.
- Better quality of life for you and the person in your care.



## Person-Centered Approach to Care

# What are the five strategies?



- 1 Use your knowledge of the person.
- 2 Connect in the moment.
- 3 Help the person take part in meaningful activities.
- 4 Focus on the relationship with the person.
- 5 Create a supportive environment.

# Five Strategies for Person-Centered Care

1

Use your knowledge of the person.

You might know the person better than anyone. But you may need to learn even more about them to provide the best possible care.



# Five Strategies for Person-Centered Care

## 1

### Use your knowledge of the person.



#### Tips

- Consider what makes the person unique. This can include their values, beliefs, interests, abilities, likes and dislikes.
- Keep in mind that their hobbies or interests may change over time.
- Talk to others who are close to the individual living with dementia if you don't know the person well.

# Five Strategies for Person-Centered Care

2

## Connect in the moment.

Connecting with the person in the moment can help you find out what they need. This will help you give the right support.



# Five Strategies for Person-Centered Care

## 2

### Connect in the moment.



#### Tips

- Try to see the world through their eyes. This can help you understand their feelings.
- See and accept the individual's reality. It may be different from yours.
- As the disease progresses:
  - Focus on feelings, not facts.
  - If a topic bothers or upsets them, switch to a different one.

## Five Strategies for Person-Centered Care

3

Help make activities meaningful.

Every experience and interaction is a chance for you to connect with the person living with dementia.



# Five Strategies for Person-Centered Care

## 3

### Help make activities meaningful.



#### Tips

- Make sure the activity has meaning and purpose for the person.
- Take into account the person's abilities, interests, likes and dislikes.
- Give choices. This helps the person feel respected and successful.
- Know that the person can feel joy, comfort and meaning even when dementia is advanced.
- Go with the flow. You do not need to plan every activity ahead of time.

## Five Strategies for Person-Centered Care

4

**Focus on a  
supportive relationship.**

Person-centered care means putting the person before the task. Be flexible and supportive during your daily caregiving responsibilities.



# Five Strategies for Person-Centered Care

4

## Focus on a supportive relationship.



Tips

- Think about choice and flexibility instead of how much you can do in a day.
- Pay attention to what's happening with the person in a certain moment.
- Encourage independence. Do activities **with** them rather than **for** them.

## Five Strategies for Person-Centered Care

5

### Create a supportive environment.

A supportive environment helps the person living with dementia be successful and independent for as long as possible.



# Five Strategies for Person-Centered Care

5

## Create a supportive environment.



Tips

- Talk with the person about what a supportive environment looks and feels like to them.
- Think about changes in the home that can increase safety.
- Suggest activities they like.
- Keep favorite items where the person can easily see them.
- Create a calm and soothing atmosphere.
- Take care of yourself. Ask family and friends for help if you feel stressed or need a break.



## Building a Support Team

# Building a Support Team



A support team is a group of people who help you with care responsibilities over the course of the disease.

1

Importance of a team

2

Who to include

3

Tips for developing your support team

# Building a Support Team

1

## Importance of a team

- You can get more done each day.
- You can stay active in your own life and take time to care for yourself.
- It can help lower your stress. Your team can step in when there is too much to do, or help out in an emergency situation.



# Building a Support Team

## 2

### Who to include

- Think about who you trust and can rely on.
- The care team may change over time as the disease progresses.
- Possible team members include:
  - Family members
  - Close friends
  - Neighbors or others who can help with daily duties.



(continued)



# Building a Support Team

## 3

### Tips for developing your support team



- Think about what kind of help you need.
- Talk with each of the people you would like to have on your team.
- When you talk to them, be specific. Tell them exactly what help you need now. Also tell them what help you may need in the future.
- Do not take it personally if someone is not able to help you.
- Show your appreciation. Thank them.





**Caring for Yourself**

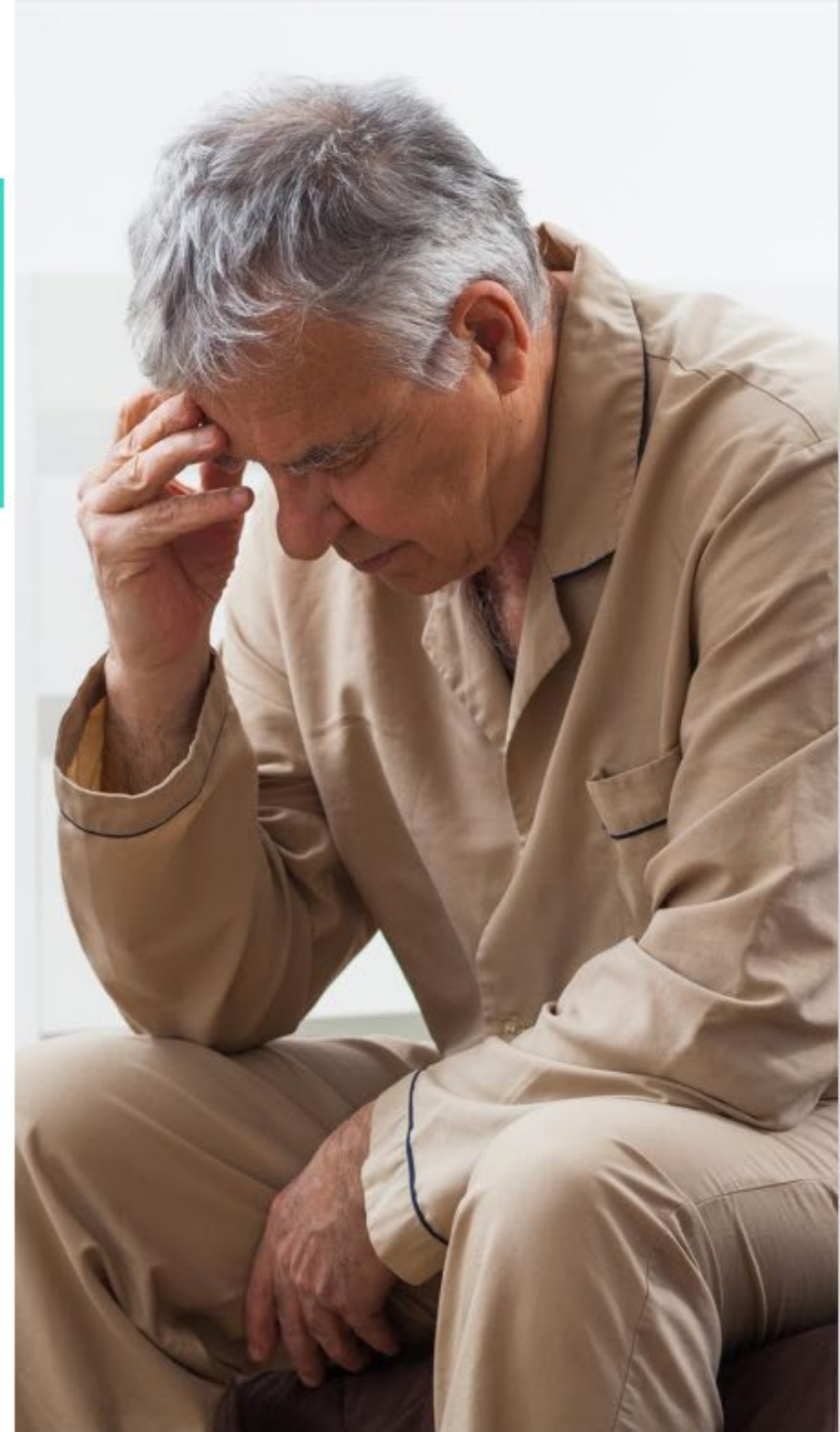
# Know the Warning Signs of Caregiver Stress



# Taking Care of Yourself

Stress can lead to physical problems. Pay attention to signs, such as:

- Blurred vision
- Stomach irritation
- High blood pressure
- Changes in appetite
- Sleeplessness



# Taking Care of Yourself



## Tips

- **Find relaxation techniques that work for you.** This could include breathing exercises or meditation.
- **Pay attention to your symptoms.** Talk about them with a doctor when you need to.

# Taking Care of Yourself



## Tips

- **Be realistic.** Grieve the losses. Focus on enjoying the positives.
- **Know you are doing your best.** The care you give does make a difference.
- **Take care of your health.** Visit your doctor regularly. Listen to your body.
- **Take a break.** No one can do it all alone. Look into respite care options.
- **Get the help you need.** Learn about community resources and care options.

# Take-Home Activity

## Managing Caregiver Stress

### Managing Caregiver Stress

As a caregiver for someone living with dementia, it is normal to feel stressed or even overwhelmed sometimes. This is especially true as your role and responsibilities change. It can also be hard to put your own health first when you are caring for someone else. But it is important to give yourself the same kindness that you give to others.

By taking care of yourself, you can continue to give good care to the person living with dementia. Know and watch for the warning signs of caregiver stress. If you see them, make a plan to reduce stress and take care of your own well-being. If you notice these signs often, talk to your doctor. Ignoring symptoms can cause your physical and mental health to get worse.

#### Tips for reducing stress

##### PHYSICAL HEALTH

- » Go for a walk while the person you care for is resting.
- » Make and keep your regular appointments with your doctor.



# Take Charge of Your Brain Health



There are several risk factors for cognitive decline and dementia. Some, such as age, we can't control. But there are **actions we can take to improve our brain health.**



Growing evidence shows that **healthy living can lower the risk of cognitive decline and possibly dementia.**



Our brains need to be taken care of at all ages. It is never **too early or too late** to take action to protect brain health.

# 10 HEALTHY HABITS FOR YOUR BRAIN



Protect your head



Be smoke-free



Get moving



Challenge your mind



Control your blood pressure



Manage diabetes



Sleep well



Stay in school



Eat right



Maintain a healthy weight



## Control Your Blood Pressure

Medications can help lower high blood pressure. And healthy habits like eating right and physical activity can help too. Work with a health care provider to control your blood pressure.

## Manage Diabetes

Type 2 diabetes can be prevented or controlled by healthier eating, increasing physical activity, and medication, if necessary.



## Get Moving

Engage in regular physical activity. This includes activities that raise your heart rate and increase blood flow to the brain and body. Find ways to build more movement into your day - walking, dancing, gardening - whatever works for you!



## Eat Right

Eating healthier foods can help reduce your risk of cognitive decline. This includes more vegetables and leaner meats/proteins, along with foods that are less processed and lower in fat. Choose healthier meals and snacks that you enjoy and are available to you.



## Maintain A Healthy Weight

Talk to your health care provider about the weight that is healthy for you. Other healthy habits on this list - eating right, physical activity and sleep - can help with maintaining a healthy weight.

## Sleep Well

Good quality sleep is important for brain health. Stay off screens before bed and make your sleep space as comfortable as possible. Do all you can to minimize disruptions. If you have any sleep-related problems, such as sleep apnea, talk to a health care provider.



## Be Smoke-Free

Quitting smoking can lower the risk of cognitive decline back to levels similar to those who have not smoked. It's never too late to stop.



## Protect Your Head

Help prevent an injury to your head. Wear a helmet for activities like biking, and wear a seatbelt. Protect yourself while playing sports. Do what you can to prevent falls, especially for older adults.





## Stay In School

Education reduces your risk of cognitive decline and dementia. Encourage youth to stay in school and pursue the highest level of training possible. Continue your own education by taking a class at a local library, college, or online.

## Challenge Your Mind

Be curious. Put your brain to work and do something that is new or hard for you. Learn a new skill. Try something artistic. Challenging your mind may have short- and long-term benefits for your brain.





**Protect your head**



**Challenge your mind**



**Stay in school**



**Be smoke-free**



**Eat right**



**Control your blood pressure**



**Manage diabetes**



**Get moving**



**Sleep well**



**Maintain a healthy weight**

**10  
HEALTHY  
HABITS  
FOR YOUR  
BRAIN**

Learn more at  
[alz.org/healthyhabits](https://alz.org/healthyhabits)



**Alzheimer's Association<sup>®</sup> Resources**



# Alzheimer's Association Resources and Support



**24/7 Helpline**  
(800.272.3900)



## Local Resources

- Find your chapter ([alz.org/findus](http://alz.org/findus))
- Support groups
- Alzheimer's Association & AARP Community Resource Finder ([alz.org/crf](http://alz.org/crf))



## Online ([alz.org](http://alz.org))

- [alz.org/care](http://alz.org/care)
- [alz.org/safety](http://alz.org/safety)
- [alz.org/driving](http://alz.org/driving)

**ALZConnected<sup>®</sup>**  
([alz.org/alzconnected](http://alz.org/alzconnected))

**ALZNavigator<sup>™</sup>**  
([alz.org/alznavigator](http://alz.org/alznavigator))



## Education Programs

- ([alz.org/education](http://alz.org/education))
- In-person, online and virtual

Questions?

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