



Town Hall Webinar Series

Dementia Care and the COVID-19 Pandemic

September 16, 2020

Gia Barsell, Manager of Dementia Services; PAC™ Independent Trainer and Consultant
Debbie Emerson, M.S., Community Health Educator; CARES® Dementia Specialist

1

Upcoming Webinars

- ***Take Control of Your Diabetes***
 Hope Hospice Town Hall Webinar
Speaker: Terry Stowell, MS, RD
 Thursday, September 24, 2020 • 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.
- ***Necessary Evils: Legal and Financial Issues***
 Family Caregiver Education Series
Speaker: Julie Fiedler, RN, JD, Horizon Elder Law
 Thursday, October 15, 2020 • 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.
- ***Dementia GEMS State Model***
 Hope Hospice Town Hall Webinar
Speaker: Gia Barsell, PAC Dementia Trainer and Consultant
 Wednesday, October 21 • 10:00-11:00 a.m.

Register for webinars at www.HopeHospice.com



2

Agenda

- Dementia Basics – a quick review.
- Brain Abilities: What changes, what remains?
- Factors critical to dementia care.
- How COVID affects person living with dementia.
- Responding to needs.
- The back-up plan.
- Facility placement.
- Hospitalizations.
- Comfort care: Palliative and Hospice
- Self-care.



3

Dementia Basics

www.HopeHospice.com/family-past

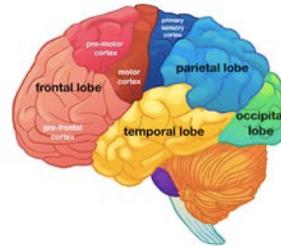
- Dementia is not a disease, but a group of symptoms that impair thinking and behavior.
- There are many underlying diseases that can cause dementia including Alzheimer's; stroke/TIAs; Parkinson's Disease and Lewy Body Dementia.
- All dementias are chronic, progressive, and terminal.
- Memory and language tend to decline first, but ultimately all brain functions are impacted.
- Persons with dementia communicate their needs and wants through their behaviors; care partners must learn to "read" those behaviors and respond appropriately.



4

How Dementia Affects the Brain

- Language
- Memory
- Reasoning
- Judgment
- Abstract Thinking
- Attention
- Vision
- Perception
- Motor Skills



5

What abilities remain?

- Need for human contact.
- Interpreting non-verbal language: Facial expressions; tone of voice, gestures
- Survival instincts: fight, fright, flight
- Emotions powerful, but no longer connected to the “rational” part of the brain.
- Responsiveness to music, rhythm, poetry, prayer.



6

What is critical to dementia care?

- Relationships.
- Human contact – physical and emotional.
- Engagement in activities.
- Use of non-verbal communication; simple instructions.
- Sense of safety and security.
- Structure, routine, repetition, consistency.
- Care partners who are:
 - Calm, patient, trusted, responsive to unmet needs.
 - Able to interpret behaviors as a means of communication.
- A strong support system.



7

Disruptions Caused by COVID

- Unable to report symptoms, how they're feeling.
- Familiarity, favorites, routine.
- Ever-changing rules.
- Masks.
- Touch.
- Proximity to others.
- Loss of support system. **SOCIAL ISOLATION!**



8

Are PWD at Higher Risk for Contracting COVID-19?

- Early studies.
 - **China:** Dementia itself probably doesn't increase risk. (March, 2020)
 - **US and UK:** Link between Alzheimer's risk gene (*APOE*) and severe symptoms of COVID-29. (May, 2020)
 - **CDC:** Having neurologic conditions such as dementia may increase your risk of severe illness from COVID-19. (Aug. 2020)
- Common age-related conditions may increase risk.
 - Diabetes.
 - Cardio-vascular disease.
 - COPD (ex. emphysema, chronic bronchitis)
 - Weakened immune system.



9

Contributing Factors

- Dementia-related behaviors may increase risk-taking (impulsivity, resistance to care).
- Inability to follow infection-control precautions:
 - Memory issues.
 - Unable to understand/follow instructions: hand-washing; covering cough; physical distancing.
- Infections in general (COVID-19; influenza; UTI's, etc.) may worsen cognitive impairment.
- Social isolation.



10

Adapting Your Strategies

"It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is most adaptable to change." -Charles Darwin

- Virtual socializing.
- Virtual activities.
- Evoking positive emotions through music.
- "Creative truths."
- Mask-wearing.
- Infection control. Use pictures to reinforce the message: *handwashing, covering coughs, wearing masks, physical distancing.*



11

SHIELD OF GLORY HYGIENIC MASK

Home About us About Transparent Hygienic Mask Shop Contact us News

Clear face shield SG4 face Shield 6" (2 Sets + 1 Replaceable Shield, Cover Eye, Nose and Mouth)

★★★★★ 1 Review

\$24.99

QTY: 1

IN STOCK

Add To Cart

Buy with **PayPal**

More Payment Options

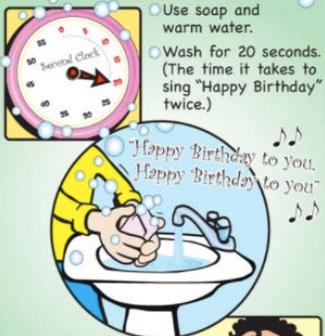
Twitter Facebook Pinterest

HOPE Hospice & Health Services

12

Wash Your Hands!

- Use soap and warm water.
- Wash for 20 seconds. (The time it takes to sing "Happy Birthday" twice.)

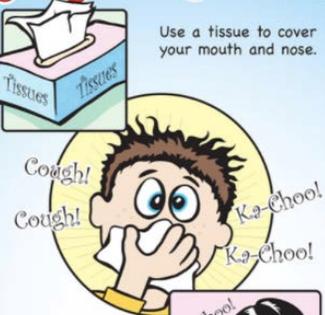


- Rinse hands well.
- Dry your hands with a paper towel or air dryer.



Cover Your Cough and Sneeze!

Use a tissue to cover your mouth and nose.



Cough!
Cough!

Ka-Choo!
Ka-Choo!

If you don't have a tissue, sneeze or cough into your arm.



Ka-Choo!

Source: www.Toucaned.com/infectioncontrol



13

**Don't shake hands.
Try this instead!**

 Hand over heart	 Tip the hat
 Namaste	 Shaka sign
 Salute	 Live long and prosper

← Stay 6 feet apart! →

Source: www.Toucaned.com



14



Source:
www.CDC.gov/coronavirus



Source:
www.seamstressesunite.org



15

Modifying Your Behaviors

- Be aware of COVID-19 symptoms in PWD:
 - Increased agitation and confusion; sudden sadness.
 - Coughing; sore throat; difficulty breathing;
 - Fever; chills; shaking with chills.
 - Muscle pain.
 - Headache.
 - New loss of taste or smell.
- Increase cleaning and sanitizing.
- Reduce media consumption.
- Maintain routines.
- Increase focus on self-care:
 - Physical, Emotional, Social.



16

The Back-up Plan

- Designate back-up caregivers.
- Organize important documents and have them readily accessible.
- Prepare emergency "to-go" kits and care plans.
 - Important documents.
 - Essential information about the care recipient.
- Investigate home care options before you need them. (see Hope Hospice blog – June 15, 2020)



17



Care Partner Emergency Plan

PERSONAL INFORMATION for CARE RECIPIENT

Full Legal Name, Photo ID
Date of Birth
Address
Medical Conditions
Dementia/Cognitive Issues
Mental Health Concerns
Allergies
Safety concerns

CURRENT MEDICATIONS (dosages, instructions)

Prescriptions
Vitamins and Herbs
Over-the-Counter

ASSISTANCE DEVICES

Wheelchair
Walker, Cane
Hearing Aids, Glasses
Medic Alert Co. & ID #
other

EMERGENCY CONTACTS (names and contact info)

Primary caregiver
Back-up caregivers
Family members
Close friends and neighbors

INSURANCE INFORMATION (photocopy - front & back)

Medicare Number
Medicare Advantage Plan or Supplement
Prescription Drug Plan
Long-term Care policy

DAILY ROUTINE and PREFERENCES

Meals/Favorite foods
Sleep habits
Bathing and hygiene
Medication schedule
Activities, exercise
Spiritual/religion
TV, Music, Pets

MEDICAL PROVIDERS (names and contact info)

Primary Care Physician
Other medical specialists
Pharmacy (local & online)
Local Hospital(s) & Urgent Care
Home Health Agency
Personal Care Agency
other

ACCESS TO FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Bank Accounts
Credit and Debit Cards
Medi-Cal/Medicaid
VA Benefits
Social Security Number (protect!)

LEGAL DOCUMENTS

Advance Directive
POLST or DNR
Power(s) of Attorney
HIPAA Authorization
Will

18

Personal Care/Home Care Agencies

- Screen agencies.
- Check for dementia care training.
- COVID protocol:
 - Paid caregiver is given option of caring for COVID+ patients.
 - Agency trains in enhanced precautions/infection control; wears complete PPE.
 - Only works with one COVID+ client at a time.
 - 2 weeks paid sick leave.
- Be a proactive care partner for all who enter your home:
 - Daily temperature checks; < 100.4° F.
 - Check for possible exposure.
 - Hand-washing and hand-sanitizer.



19

Facility Placement

- Care partner concerns: Safety, isolation.
- Be aware of protocol for keeping residents and staff healthy; adherence to State and Federal (Medicare) guidelines.
- Keep in regular contact with facility staff.
 - Be sure they have your current contact info.
 - Ask them for help in finding strategies to stay connected to your loved one.
- Stay up-to-date on changes in guidelines during re-opening. Ex.:
 - San Francisco Co. now allows outside visits in nursing homes.
 - Compassionate care situations.



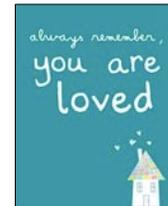
20

Staying Connected



Skylight Frame
www.skylightframe.com

Also available on Amazon.com
 \$159.00



21

Advanced Dementia and Hospitalizations

- The C.A.R.E. Act
 - Establish yourself as designated caregiver.
 - Informed of all procedures, medications, discharge, etc.
- Inform staff about dementia diagnosis.
- Be prepared to stay with your loved one.
- Be aware that staff and you may face difficulties due to lack of cooperation with care and diagnostic procedures.
- Be prepared with strategies/resources for calming, reassuring, creating familiarity.



22

Hospitalization or Comfort Care?

- Compassionate care guidelines for hospitals.
- End-of-life wishes.
 - Have the conversation – in advance!
 - POLST and/or Advance Directives updated.
- Palliative and Hospice Care.
 - Palliative care: focus on comfort and quality of life at any stage of a medical condition.
 - Hospice care: comfort care for serious and advanced medical conditions with life expectancy of six months or less.



23

Hospice Care During COVID

- In-person visits by RN during enrollment or to manage uncontrolled symptoms; enhanced PPE.
- Meds may be delivered by local pharmacy; durable medical equipment (DME) delivered by contracted service provider.
- Family and patient-centered care offered through phone calls and video visits (social workers, spiritual care, therapy, nutrition and dementia care consults, etc.).
- Volunteer visits suspended; but may provide other types of virtual support.
- Hospice support staff on call 24/7.
- Follow compassionate care guidelines.
- To find a hospice agency:
 - Medicare – Care Compare: <https://www.medicare.gov/care-compare/>
 - National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization <https://www.nhpco.org/>



24

Take a Break!

- Caregiver self-care is a **PRIORITY**.
- Simple Strategies:
 - *Self-care in five minutes or less*: Jane Travis website
 - Hope Hospice: *Self-care during COVID quarantine* - video and downloadable worksheet
- Caregiver respite options:
 - Local home care/personal care agencies
 - County Area Agency on Aging: www.n4a.org
 - Alzheimer's Association: Respite Care Options
- Virtual support groups:
 - Family Caregiver Alliance: www.caregiver.org
 - Alzheimer's Association
 - Local senior centers



25

Thank you!

- Please complete our online evaluation – will appear on the screen when you leave webinar.
- Webinar materials posted: www.HopeHospice.com/family-past



26