

# Caring Matters

## Symptoms of Dementia



Dementia is a brain disorder that makes it hard for people to remember, learn and communicate, eventually limiting their ability to care for themselves.

Dementia may also cause changes in mood and personality. Early on, lapses in memory and clear thinking may bother the person who has dementia. Later, disruptive behavior and other problems may create a burden for caregivers and other family members.

The symptoms of dementia include:

- **Recent memory loss.** All of us forget things for a while and then remember them later. People who have dementia often forget things, but they never remember them. They might ask you the same question over and over, each time forgetting that you've already given them the answer. They won't even remember that they already asked the question.
- **Difficulty performing familiar tasks.** Those who have dementia might cook a meal but forget to serve it. They might even forget that they cooked it.
- **Problems with language.** Dementia sufferers may forget simple words or use the wrong ones. This makes it hard to understand what they want.
- **Time and place disorientation.** People who have dementia may get lost on their own street. They may forget how they got to a certain place and how to get back home.

*(cont pg 4)*

## In This Issue

Symptoms of Dementia.....	pg 1
Hiring the Right Help.....	pg 2
Did You Know? .....	pg 2
Super Food.....	pg 2
Fancy Footwork.....	pg 2
Heart Health.....	pg 2
Snapshots of Ageism.....	pg 3
Pets for the Elderly.....	pg 3
Seniors and Video Chats.....	pg 3
Creating Special Moments.....	pg 3
Humour.....	pg 3

## Director's Message

*Happy New Year!* 

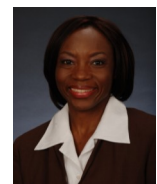
As another year draws to a close, many of us tend to reflect on life in general and relationships in particular. As an entrepreneur,

I have met hundreds of people and developed relationships with people from different generations, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Like many, I find myself reflecting on the many and varied relationships I have formed and have perceived that successful relationships at all levels are integral to the building of a great society. I have also become conscious that as I take a more active part in my community, my sense of belonging has increased significantly and, for me, life has yielded a deeper sense of meaning and purpose.

Inspired by personal experiences, I have discerned that:

- Establishing relationships with ordinary people who share common values and past experiences can be a pleasurable occurrence.
- Sustainable relationships are based upon honesty, integrity, mutual trust and flexibility.
- Vibrant exchange of thoughts and ideas among friends, family or co-workers often result in solutions to many problems.
- Anticipating and fulfilling the needs of others necessitates that we, at least temporarily, focus less on our personal needs. However, this results in a sense of self fulfillment and personal worthiness.
- Asking for and receiving help is not an act of cowardice or lack of independence. Being able to know when you need help and asking for it is an act of independence.
- Investment in friendships and relationships always yields positive results, even in bad economical times.

My best wishes for the holidays and a safe and prosperous 2011.



Opal Rowe, MBA

## Hiring the Right Help

Looking for some extra caregiving help? Here's a quick guide to the type of help you can hire:



- **Personal care** involves assistance with a variety of daily living activities such as bathing, dressing, toilet use, grooming and eating.
- **Homemaker services** include help with cooking, light cleaning, laundry, grocery shopping and other chores.
- **Companionship** ranges from daily telephone calls from a "buddy," to a daily friendly visitor, to round-the-clock companions.
- **Home health-care** includes nursing, speech, occupational, physical and respiratory therapy, home health aides, and social work or psychiatric care.

Source: HelpGuide.org

## Did You Know?



A national survey conducted by Acrobat Research for Living Assistance Services indicates that:

- Almost 80% of Canadians believe aging at home offers a better quality of life.
- The older people get, the more they express a desire to stay at home.
- The greatest anxieties around institutional care are lack of privacy, intimacy and abuse.
- 72.5% of Canadians want to choose the caregiver for their aging parents.
- 70% of Canadians are not confident in the ability of their provincial healthcare system to provide for them in their senior years.
- Women aged 30 to 49 are most concerned about the quality of senior care.

## Super Food

Mother Nature has thoughtfully colour-coded cancer-fighting "super foods" to make them easy to spot. Look for dark-coloured fruits and vegetables. Watch for dark leafy greens like kale, collard greens, broccoli, spinach and cabbage; tomatoes, sweet potatoes and squash; berries of any kind; and avocados.



Source: lookgoodfeelbetter.ca

## LIVING ASSISTANCE SERVICES

### Our Vision

To provide first-rate home care with reliable, conscientious, knowledgeable and affordable personal support workers to care recipients and families in need.

## Fancy Footwork



The sultry moves of the tango can help the aging brain. McGill University researchers in Montreal, Quebec, have discovered that the footwork required to perform the tango improves balance in older adults.

Researchers recruited 30 healthy seniors aged 62 to 90 who had experienced a fall within the last year and who had developed a fear of falling. Half of them were assigned to take tango lessons and the other half to a walking group. After ten weeks, the tango group showed more improvement in balance, posture and motor coordination than the walking group.

Source: McGill Faculty of Medicine

## Heart Health

### Hot under the collar?

Late and stuck behind a slow driver, you finally get to work and your computer crashes. Later in the day, the grandchildren are driving you nuts. Some of us may take these obstacles in stride; others react in anger.



### Our five step solution:

1. Recognize your anger or impatience as an indication you are "hooked" by some situation.
2. Pause and calm your body. Take a deep breath and relax your muscles.
3. Focus on your heart. Breathe slowly.
4. Bring to mind a situation where you felt or expressed love. Make the memory real; feel it, see it, hear it.
5. Return to the hook situation and consider whether there is anything you can appreciate about it now.

Source: Canyon Ranch

## Snapshots of Ageism



**"Since when did a number  
make me useless?"**

I remember my grandfather saying those words. He had a tube of glue in one hand and a clamp in the other while repairing my kitchen chairs. Earlier that day he had a meeting with his bank, the same bank he had dealt with for 40 years. They had declined

his mortgage loan request based on his age, though the bankers slyly avoided stating this fact. "They don't know what I can do, how long I'll live, or how healthy I am! For them, none of these things matter. Since when did old age mean fewer rights?"

My grandfather retired from teaching in his early sixties. He never wanted to stop working, but he very much enjoyed the change. For a number of years he was the neighbourhood maintenance man. He solved all sorts of household problems for scores of people. In many ways he was lucky because he was handy with tools. Many others aren't gifted the way he is. Many his age find themselves put out to pasture well before their due date.

Ageism takes various forms. Watching my grandfather experience it reminded me of other instances. In previous careers I watched immensely capable and qualified people apply for work and be passed-over merely because of their birth date. *(cont pg 4)*

## Pets for the Elderly



There's nothing so comforting as to be able to hug a pet and be rewarded with a trusting look, a wag of the tail, and even a sloppy kiss or two.

Back in 1980, Erika Friedmann, Ph.D., and professor of health and nutrition sciences for Brooklyn College in New York, studied the effect of pets on heart disease patients. Her co-researcher, Aaron

Katcher, M.D., reported, "The presence of a pet was the strongest social predictor of survival not just for lonely or depressed people, but everyone – independent of marital status and access to social support from human beings."

Cats and dogs are the most common types of pets owned by the elderly, but rabbits, guinea pigs, birds and turtles are also popular choices. Pet ownership can offer a greater sense of worth, ease depression, combat loneliness, and relieve stress.

*Source: parentgiving.com*

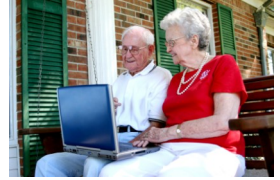
***"I don't feel old. I don't feel anything until noon.***

***Then its time for my nap"***

***Bob Hope***

## Seniors & Video Chats

Though some seniors feel uncomfortable with computers, one of the greatest advances of the modern era technology that enables people



to see each other virtually anywhere in the world through cameras in their computers, is improving the lives of nursing home residents living far from family members.

According to a study in the June issue of the *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, nursing home residents who used video chats - or, technically speaking, videoconferencing. - to keep in touch with family members felt it enriched their lives. Thirty-four seniors from ten nursing homes took part in the study, and the 18 women and 16 men had an average age of 75.

All seniors who participated in these video chats said that the experience improved their lives, with just under two-thirds saying it was the second-best option to family visiting, and a third saying it gave them a true picture of family life.

*Source: parentgiving.com*

## Creating Special Moments

There are a multitude of opportunities to create special moments with your aging parent. Here are just a few.



- Sit down and tell your parent how much he or she means to you.
- Photograph you and your parent doing things together and then create a special album for him or her.
- Take your mom or dad to a special place that means something to him or her and just sit and enjoy the moment.
- Play songs that may make your parent smile as long-forgotten memories bubble to the surface.
- Making special gifts for seniors is also a way to create special memories of family, friends and loved ones.

*Source: parentgiving.com*

## Symptoms of Dementia (cont from pg 3)

- **Poor judgment.** Even a person who doesn't have dementia can get distracted. But those who have dementia can forget simple things, like putting on a coat before going out in cold weather.
- **Problems with abstract thinking.** Anybody might have trouble balancing a cheque book, but people who have dementia may forget what the numbers are and what has to be done with them.
- **Misplacing things.** People who have dementia may put things in the wrong places. They might put an iron in the freezer or a wristwatch in the sugar bowl. Then they can't find these things later.
- **Changes in mood.** Everyone is moody at times, but those who have dementia may have fast mood swings, going from calm to tears to anger in a few minutes.
- **Personality changes.** People who have dementia may have drastic changes in personality. They might become irritable, suspicious or fearful.
- **Loss of initiative.** Those who have dementia may become passive. They might not want to go places or see other people.



Some causes of dementia can be treated. However, once brain cells have been destroyed, they cannot be replaced. Treatment may slow or stop the loss of more brain cells. When the cause of Dementia can't be treated, the focus of care is on helping the person with his or her daily activities and reducing upsetting symptoms. Some medicines can help with dementia. Your family doctor will talk with you about treatment options.

As the caregiver of a person who has dementia/ Alzheimer's, you must also take care of yourself. If you become too tired or frustrated, you will be less able to help your family member. Ask for help from relatives, friends and local home care agencies. Look for caregiver support groups. Other people who are dealing with the same problems may have some good ideas on how to cope better and how to make caregiving easier. Adult day care centers may be helpful. They can give your family member a consistent environment and a chance to socialize.

Living Assistance Services provides non-medical elder care home services and their staff is qualified and trained to care for people with dementia. This allows the individual to remain in the familiar surroundings of his or her home, while providing respite care for his or her family.

*Call us for a free in-home consultation at (416) 628 5072*

Source: familydoctor.org

## Snapshots of Ageism (cont from pg 1)

I also experienced senior clients being denied a driver's license though they were more capable than many drivers half their age.

One of the most objectionable forms of ageism appears in comedy entertainment. Why is it, I have often wondered, funny when a comedian delivers a joke about accidentally seeing a senior woman naked? This is remarkable when some research indicates that seniors are likely having better sex and more frequently than the foolish comedian!



Alice Munro

The use of patronizing language can also slowly demoralize seniors. If seniors are told what they can and cannot do, it can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. As at any age, the recipient of these negative messages often starts to believe in his or her supposed limitations.

The term ageism was coined in 1969. It's not surprising that it was invented so recently. There was a time seniors were more admired and respected. As our society has evolved, we have seemingly placed seniors in a category that isolates one generation from the next. These are little ways that ageism affects us all.

One of my favorite authors is Alice Munro. At 79, she still writes beautifully and her work is still published in the *New Yorker*. Not everyone is as gifted as Alice, but regardless of her age, she proves there is so much that seniors can contribute.

Oops ... one of my kitchen drawers has fallen apart, and I know just the guy to fix it !

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