

# **Dementia and Alzheimer's Training Take Away Sheet**

## **The Law**

- **Policy Act No. 14-194**
  - An act concerning the Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia Task Force's Recommendations on Training.
- **Training Compliance**
  - In all residential settings that support individuals who are 50 years old or older and with Down syndrome, agencies must have documentation that at least one staff per home (i.e. CLA, CCH, CRS, ICF, etc.) is annually trained on Alzheimer and Dementia care.

**Report all baseline changes, immediately to your assigned program nurse and supervisor.**

## **Definition of Dementia**

Dementia is the loss of cognitive functioning, thinking, remembering, and reasoning, to such an extent that it interferes with a person's daily life and activities.

## **Dementia Progression & Strategies**

### **Early-Stage Dementia**

- Unable to produce the right word or name.
- Unable to remember names when introduced to new people.
- Having difficulty performing tasks in social or work settings.
- Forgetting material that was just read.
- Losing or misplacing a valuable object.
- Experiencing increased trouble with planning or organizing

### **Mid-Stage Dementia**

- Being forgetful of events or personal history.
- Feeling moody or withdrawn, especially in socially or mentally challenging situations.
- Being unable to recall information about themselves like their address or telephone number, and the high school or college they attended.
- Experiencing confusion about where they are or what day it is.
- Requiring help choosing proper clothing for the season or the occasion.
- Having trouble controlling their bladder and bowels.

- Experiencing changes in sleep patterns, such as sleeping during the day and becoming restless at night.
- Showing an increased tendency to wander and become lost.
- Demonstrating personality and behavioral changes, including suspiciousness and delusions or compulsive, repetitive behavior like handwringing or tissue shredding.

## **Late-Stage Dementia**

- Will Require around-the-clock assistance with daily personal care.
- Lose awareness of recent experiences as well as of their surroundings.
- Experience changes in physical abilities, including walking, sitting and, eventually, swallowing
- Have difficulty communicating.
- Become vulnerable to infections, especially pneumonia

## **Keep a safe and accessible environment**

- Simplify the home, too much furniture can make it hard to move around freely.
- Get rid of clutter, such as piles of newspapers and magazines.
- Have a sturdy handrail on stairways.
- Put carpet on stairs or mark the edges of steps with brightly colored tape so the person can see them more easily.
- Remove small throw rugs. Use rugs with nonskid backing instead.
- Make sure cords to electrical outlets are out of the way or tacked to baseboards.
- Clean up spills right away
- Shoes and slippers with good traction also help the person move around safely
- Make floors and walls different colors. This creates contrast and makes it easier for the person to see.
- Remove curtains and rugs with busy patterns that may confuse the person.
- Mark the edges of steps with brightly colored tape so people can see the steps as they go up or down stairs.
- Use brightly colored signs or simple pictures to label the bathroom, bedroom, and kitchen.
- Be careful about small pets. The person with Alzheimer's may not see the pet and trip over it
- Limit the size and number of mirrors in your home and think about where to put them. Mirror images may confuse the person with Alzheimer's disease.
- Use dishes and placemats in contrasting colors for easier identification.
- Use signs with simple written instructions to remind them of danger or show them where to go.
- Label hot-water faucets red and cold-water faucets blue or write the words "hot" and "cold" near them.
- Put signs near the oven, toaster, iron, and other things that get hot.
- Pad any sharp corners on your furniture or replace or remove furniture with sharp corners.
- Test the water to make sure it is a comfortable temperature before the person gets into the bath or shower.

- Don't play the TV, radio, or music too loudly, and don't play them at the same time.
- Limit the number of people that visit at any one time.
- If there is a gathering, settle the person with Alzheimer's in an area with fewer people.
- Shut the windows if it's very noisy outside.
- If the person wears a hearing aid, check the batteries and settings often.

### **Common personality and behavior change you may see include:**

- Getting upset or angry more easily
- Acting depressed or not interested in things
- Hiding things or believing other people are hiding things
- Imagining things that aren't there
- Wandering away from home
- Pacing a lot
- Showing unusual sexual behavior
- Hitting you or other people
- Misunderstanding what he or she sees or hears
- You also may notice that the person stops caring about how he or she looks, stops bathing, and wants to wear the same clothes every day
- Feelings such as sadness, fear, stress, confusion, or anxiety
- Health-related problems, including illness, pain, new medications, or lack of sleep
- Other physical issues like infections, constipation, hunger or thirst, or problems seeing or hearing

### **Caregiver General Tips**

- Keep things simple - Ask or say one thing at a time.
- Have a daily routine, so the person knows when certain things will happen.
- Reassure the person that they are safe, and you are there to help.
- Focus on the person's feelings rather than words. For example, say, "You seem worried."
- Don't argue or try to reason with the person.
- Try not to show your frustration or anger. Take your space if needed.
- Use humor when you can.
- Give people who pace a lot a safe place to walk. Provide comfortable, sturdy shoes. Give them light snacks to eat as they walk, so they don't lose too much weight, and make sure they have enough to drink.
- Try using music, singing, or dancing to distract the person.
- Ask for help. For instance, say, "Let's set the table" or "I need help folding the clothes."

### **Additional Resources and Information:**

**CDC: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:** [What is Alzheimer's Disease? | CDC](#)

**Alzheimer's Association:** [What is Alzheimer's Disease? | CDC](#)

**CDC: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:** [Facts about Down Syndrome | CDC](#)

**National Down Syndrome Society:**[About Down Syndrome | National Down Syndrome Society \(NDSS\)](#)