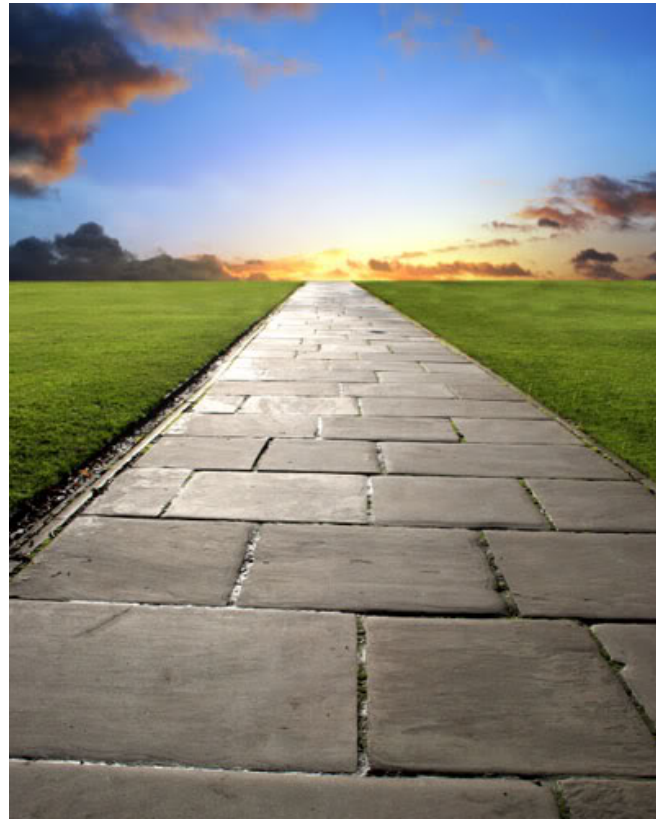


Dementia Stages

What to Expect and Tools You Can Use



Are there stages of dementia?

- Scales exist, though not perfect
- Scales mainly track Alzheimer's dementia
- Global Deterioration Scale for Assessment of Primary Degenerative Dementia
- AKA: GDS or Reisberg scale

What does “cognitive” mean?

- Stuff Your Brain Does
- Process information from senses (eyes, ears, mouth, nose)
- Remember/Learn
- Plan and Make Decisions
- Speak
- Perform activities (work, IADL's, ADL's)
- Move

Stage 1 – “Everything’s Fine”

- Diagnosis: No Dementia
- No Cognitive Decline

Stage 2 – Mom's complaining about her memory

- Very mild cognitive decline
- Diagnosis: Normal forgetfulness with aging. No dementia.

Stage 2 – What You Might See

- Forgetting names
- Forgetting where they put something, then being able to find it later
- Person complains, but you don't notice much difference

Stage 2 – Tools for You

- Visual reminders (post it notes)
- Organizing (same place for things all the time)
- Calendars

Stage 3 - Mom's Having Some Problems with Her Memory

- Mild cognitive decline
- Diagnosis: Mild Cognitive Impairment
- Typically occurs 7 years prior to onset of dementia
- Not all people with MCI progress to dementia, but risk is higher. About 10% per year progress to dementia (ages 70 to 89)

Stage 3 – What You Might See

- More forgetfulness, trouble concentrating
- Can't perform difficult tasks at work
- Can get lost or forget words
- Still can function safely independently

Stage 3 – Tools for You

- Visual reminders (post it notes)
- Organizing (same place for things all the time)
- Calendars
- GPS
- Planning for work transition
- Advanced Directive (including decision on power of attorney)

Signs of Alzheimer's/dementia	Typical age-related changes
Poor judgment and decision-making	Making a bad decision once in a while
Inability to manage a budget	Missing a monthly payment
Losing track of the date or the season	Forgetting which day it is and remembering it later
Difficulty having a conversation	Sometimes forgetting which word to use
Misplacing things and being unable to retrace steps to find them	Losing things from time to time

Stage 4 – Mom needs some help because of her memory (even though she thinks she doesn't)

- Moderate cognitive decline
- Diagnosis: Early stage dementia
- Typically lasts 2 years

Stage 4 – What You Might See

- Key Point: The person now cannot function safely on their own
- Finances
- Transportation (driving)
- Cooking meals
- Doing housework
- Taking medications
- Shopping
- Using the phone
- Wandering

Stage 4 – Tools for You

- Expect denial
- Expect accusations
- Repetitive questions
- Try to put yourself in their shoes
- Distraction, not confrontation (stealing, taking over)
- Touch/nonverbal communication
- Self care
- Getting Help. It's not abandonment!

Stage 5 – Mom needs help to do basic things

- Moderately severe cognitive decline
- Diagnosis: Mid-stage dementia
- Typically lasts 1.5 years

Stage 5 – What You Might See

- Cannot perform basic tasks
- May need help dressing, bathing, eating
- Confusion about time and/or place
- Mistake past for present
- Becoming very fearful during help for basic activities
- Doesn't understand what you're saying

Stage 5 – Tools for You

- Imagine the person speaks another language (bath)
- Explain things one step at a time
- Body language
- Calm voice
- Self Care
- Getting Help
- Tools from before

Stage 6 - Mom Doesn't Remember Who I Am

- Severe Cognitive Decline
- Diagnosis: Mid Stage Dementia
- Typically lasts 2.5 years

Stage 6 – What You Might See

- Need significant help with dressing, bathing, eating, using the bathroom, moving from one place to another
- Forget names of family members
- Incontinence
- Trouble speaking
- Personality changes
- Delusions, hallucinations, depression, anxiety

Stage 6 – Tools for You

- Grieving
- Taking Breaks (Tree)
- Getting Help
- Physical presence
- Body language
- Physical touch

Stage 7 – Mom won't be around much longer

- Very severe cognitive decline
- Diagnosis: Late dementia
- Typically lasts 2.5 years, ends with death

Stage 7 – What You Might See

- Decreased ability to speak
- Decreased ability to move
- Decreased ability to walk, sit up, smile, hold their head up, feed themselves

Stage 7 – Tools for You

- Grieving
- POLST, advanced directives
- Physical presence
- Tone of voice
- Touch
- Hospice

Summary

- This is hard
- Get help early
- Take care of yourself

Resources and References

- DementiaDoctors.org
- Alz.org
- Seven Stages of Dementia. Symptoms and Progression.
<https://www.dementiacarecentral.com/aboutdementia/facts/stages/>
- The 36 Hour Day: A Family Guide to Caring for People Who Have Alzheimer Disease, Related Dementias, and Memory Loss by Nany L. Mace and Peter V. Rabins
- Mild Cognitive Impairment.
<http://alz.org/mnnd/documents/Dr. Petersen - MCI Article.pdf>