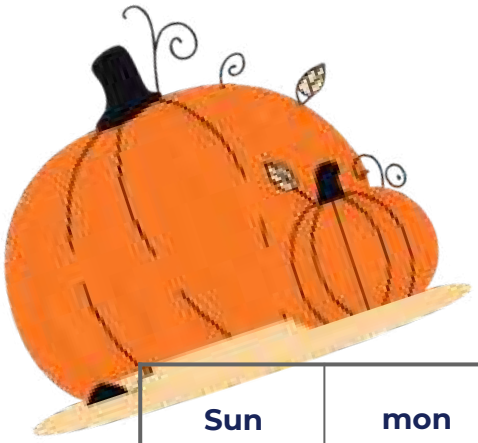
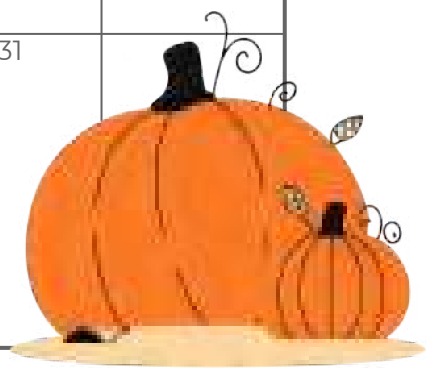


October 2025

Sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
			1 **Cup of Care Caregiver Group @ Lindale 12:00 PM**	2 **Caregiver Education Group @ Lindale 12:00 PM**	3	4
5	6 **Caregiver Education Group @ Elan 1:00 PM**	7	8 **Caregiver Education Group @ YWCA 11:00 AM**	9	10	11
12	13 **Caregiver Education Group @ Brookdale Trinity 1:00 PM**	14 **Caregiver Group @ Brookdale 10 AM** **Time of Reflection W/ Dr. Praderio @ Lindale 12 PM**	15	16	17	18
19	20 **Understanding Alzheimer's & Dementia "Caregiver Group" @ Joe Garza 12:00 PM**	21	22 **Krafty Karegivers Caregiver Group @ Lindale 12:00 PM**	23	24	25
26	27 **Caregiver Education Group @ The Viera 1:00 PM**	28 **Grandparent Caregiver Group @ AAA 10:00 AM**	29	30	31	



October 2025

Caregiving in The Comfort of Home®

Area Agency on Aging Coastal Bend

Area Agency on Aging of the Coastal Bend
2910 Leopard St. Corpus Christi, Texas 78408
361-883-3935 or 800-252-9240

Caregiver Assistance News

"CARING FOR YOU...CARING FOR OTHERS"

Alzheimer's – Dealing with Pain

As Alzheimer's disease (AD) or other related dementia worsens, seniors are more likely to feel pain. Most people with moderate to severe dementia feel pain every day. Many don't get proper treatment because their pain isn't noticed by family and caregivers.

People with AD often have a blank facial expression, which hides normal signs of pain like frowning or a tense mouth. Many also lose the ability to say "this hurts" or "I'm in pain."

Screaming, hitting, or being withdrawn are often mistaken for dementia symptoms, but they may actually be signs of *untreated* pain. Pain can also cause poor sleep. Even if a person seems to sleep more, the sleep is usually light and not restful.

When pain is properly treated, people with dementia may become more awake, social, and calm, even if the medicine can make them a little sleepy.

It can be difficult to figure out whether someone with dementia is in pain, and what is causing the pain. People with dementia may not be able to tell you in words that they are in pain, or even where the pain is. Sometimes they can be in great pain and not be able to communicate directly. Watch for common causes of pain. Look, touch, listen and think about the different types of pain your loved one may be experiencing.

Inspect his or her mouth for oral sores due to decay or ill-fitting dentures. Inspect feet for skin lesions or issues from ingrown toenails. Do you see your loved one wince or guard against gentle pressing on the abdomen? Feel large joints, like knees and hands. Do they feel warm or is one swollen? Does she appear more comfortable in certain positions?

In the early stage of dementia, he or she may answer in what seems like a response to the question the doctor is asking—even though they do not understand the question—but are simply trying to be helpful.

For example, wherever the doctor touches and asks, "Does it hurt here?" They may keep saying, "Yes." This does not help the doctor to figure out where the pain is.

You know the person in your care better than the doctor, so you will be able to interpret her way of communicating. Here are some signs of pain that will be of help when the senior is unable to tell you directly—

- verbal cues—crying or moaning, calling out

Article continues on page 2

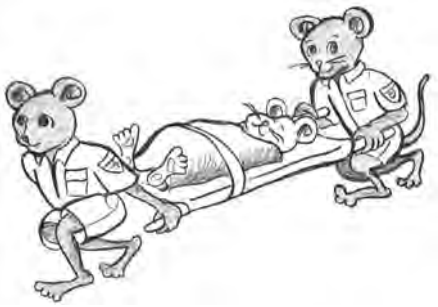
- rubbing or protecting one part of the body
- facial expression, frowning, or grimacing
- decreased activity level, tired or withdrawn
- trouble sleeping
- a stiffened upper or lower body that is held rigidly and moved slowly
- increased agitation, aggressive behavior, pacing or rocking, swearing or yelling
- mental status changes, increased confusion or irritability

Each person has his or her own pain signature. You, as caregiver, will know what behavior is typical. You can recognize that there is a change in behavior and perhaps when that change indicates pain.

Source: Caregiving in the Comfort of Home for Alzheimer's Disease; Mayo Clinic

What to Do in an Emergency

In the course of caring for a person with AD it is likely that an accident will occur or that the person will appear to be seriously ill. A person with dementia can fall and break a bone and not complain of pain. On the other hand, a relatively minor illness or discomfort may make the person extremely upset. Because of his dementia, the person may not be able to help you to decide what kind of care is needed. If it is an emergency, call 911. **You should not try to take the person to the emergency room on your own**. Inform staff members that he has Alzheimer's. The following signs always indicate an emergency that needs *immediate* attention—



- ☞ loss of consciousness or a marked change in mental state
- ☞ sudden severe chest pain or difficulty breathing
- ☞ a fall that results in severe pain or inability to move
- ☞ an accident that results in a blow to the head
- ☞ uncontrollable bleeding
- ☞ high fever accompanied by confusion and delusions
- ☞ repeated or forceful vomiting
- ☞ failure to urinate for more than twelve hours
- ☞ sudden slurring of speech, loss of vision or balance, extreme weakness
- ☞ violent or uncontrollable behavior
- ☞ swallowing a poisonous substance

Taking Care of Yourself— Simple Comforts

When a person with dementia is in pain, it can be very stressful for caregivers. Reducing pain can help both the patient and the caregiver.

***Music therapy** is a gentle and effective way to help ease pain. Just playing songs your loved one enjoyed in their younger years can help. Music can—*

- *Distract from pain*
- *Boost mood by releasing feel-good chemicals (endorphins)*
- *Bring back happy memories*
- *Help them feel more connected and calm*

*Other simple ways to bring comfort include **aromatherapy** such as enjoying pleasant scents like lavender or vanilla. **Friendly dogs or cats** can lift spirits, as can drawing or coloring together. These activities don't need special training and can be done at home, often bringing peace to both the patient and the family.*

Live Life Laughing!

To me you are purr-fect.
I'm litter-ly in love with you!

Inspiration

Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted to change the world. Today I am wise, so I am changing myself.
—Rumi

Memory Care

At a hospital or a doctor's visit, make sure the person in your care wears needed eyeglasses, dentures, hearing aids or other assisted devices. Bring comfort items, such as her favorite blanket, to appointments.

Caregiver Assistance News

"CARING FOR YOU ... CARING FOR OTHERS"

QUICK QUIZ

Common symptoms of Alzheimer's are physical decline and difficulty with mental tasks. Pain is another frequent symptom, although it is often overlooked and undertreated. Answer True or False to the questions below.

1. A person with dementia always understands what the doctor is asking her about her pain.
T F

2. Rubbing or protecting one part of his or her body may not be a sign of pain.
T F

3. A person with dementia can fall and break a bone, and not complain of pain.
T F

4. You should not try to take the person with dementia to the emergency room on your own.
T F

5. In the emergency room inform staff members that the senior has Alzheimer's disease and may *not* be able to provide accurate information about his condition or to follow their instructions.
T F

6. A major cause of emergency room visits for frail or demented older adults is dehydration.
T F

7. The caregiver or loved one knows what behavior is typical and that a change in behavior perhaps indicates pain.
T F

8. Increased agitation, aggressive behavior, pacing or rocking can be a sign of pain.
T F

9. People with dementia can always tell you in words that they are in pain, or even where the pain is located.
T F

10. Dehydration occurs when a person is either not getting enough liquids daily or excreting too much urine.
T F

Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____

KEY: 1. F; 2. F; 3. T; 4. T; 5. T; 6. T; 7. T; 8. T; 9. F; 10. T

October 2025 Event List

VIRTUAL AND IN-PERSON CAREGIVER EDUCATION GROUPS

When: WED. October 1st, 2025 "A CUP OF CARE" MEMORY CAFE
Where: ***LINDALE SENIOR CENTER*** @ 3135 Swantner St. Corpus Christi
Type: In-Person Caregiver Support & for Loved Ones
Time: 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM
RSVP: Mary Ann Mondragon (361) 826-2343

When: THURS. October 2nd, 2025 "Caregiver Education Group"
Where: ***LINDALE SENIOR CENTER*** @ 3135 Swantner St., Corpus Christi **Type**: In-Person Caregiver Education Group
Time: 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM
Info: Mary Ann Mondragon (361) 826-2343 or Christina Edwardson (361) 232-5150

When: MON. October 6th, 2025 "CAREGIVER EDUCATION GROUP"
Where: Elan Corpus Christi @ 5144 Lipes Blvd., Corpus Christi
Type: In-Person Caregiver Education Group
Time: 1:00 PM to 2:00 PM
Info: Mary Ann Mondragon (361) 826-2343 or Christina Edwardson (361) 232-5150

When: WED. October 8th, 2025 "CAREGIVER EDUCATION GROUP"
Where: ***YWCA*** @ 4601 Corona Dr., Corpus Christi
Type: In-Person Caregiver Education Group
Time: 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Info: Mary Ann Mondragon (361) 826-2343 or Christina Edwardson (361) 232-5150

When: MON. October 13th, 2025 "CAREGIVER EDUCATION GROUP"
Where: Brookdale Trinity @ 101 N. Upper Broadway, Corpus Christi
Type: In-Person Caregiver Education Group
Time: 1:00 PM - 2:00 PM
Info: Mary Ann Mondragon (361) 826-2343 or Christina Edwardson (361) 232-5150

When: TUE. October 14th 2025 "CAREGIVER EDUCATION GROUP"
Where: ***BROOKDALE*** @ 6410 Meadowvista Dr., Corpus Christi
Type: In-Person Caregiver Education Group
Time: 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM
Info: Christina Edwardson (361) 232-5150

When: TUES. October 14th 2025 "A Time of Reflection"
Where: ***Lindale Senior Center*** @ 3135 Swantner St, Corpus Christi
Type: In-Person Caregiver Support and Education
Time: 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM
Info: Mary Ann Mondragon (361) 826-2343

When: MON. October 20th 2025 "CAREGIVER EDUCATION GROUP"
Where: ***Joe Garza Rec Center*** @ 3204 Highland Ave, Corpus Christi
Type: In-Person Caregiver Support and Education
Time: 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM
Info: Mary Ann Mondragon (361) 826-2343

When: WED. October 22nd 2025 "Krafty Karegivers"
Where: LINDALE SENIOR CENTER @ 3135 Swantner St.
Type: In-Person Caregiver Support & for Loved Ones
Time: 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM
Info: Mary Ann Mondragon (361) 826-2343

When: MON. October 27th, 2025 Caregiver Education Group
Where: The Viera "Memory Care Unit" @ 3010 Airline
Type: In-Person Caregiver Support & for Loved Ones **Time**: 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM
Info: Mary Ann Mondragon (361) 826-2343 or Christina Edwardson (361) 232-5150

Dr. Nestor H. Praderio, M.D.
Face to Face
Dementia Educational Program for The Caregiver

WHEN: **WED. October 22nd 2025**
WHERE: ***Virtual***
TYPE: Caregiver Support Program
TIME: 5:00 PM
RSVP: Texas Face to Face (361) 359-2199

GRANDPARENTS AND OTHER RELATIVES RAISING CHILDREN ~ GRRC~ MCH FAMILY ~ AN EMPOWERMENT GROUP

WHEN: TUESDAY October 28th 2025
WHERE: ***Area Agency on Aging***
@ 2910 Leopard St. Corpus Christi
TYPE: In-Person Caregiver Education Group
TIME: 10:00 - 11:00 AM
PHONE: (361) 334-2255 or (361-) 883-3935

Alzheimer's Association
Where: **Visit alz.org/CRF to register or call: 800-272-3900**
VIRTUAL/PHONE CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

For Additional Information contact:
Christina Edwardson
Family Caregiver Specialist
Office: (361) 883-3935 Ext: 51

Facilitations are provided by:
THE NATIONAL FAMILY CAREGIVER SUPPORT PROGRAM
a program of
Texas Health and Human Services

CAREGIVER TELECONNECTION

www.caregiverteleconnection.org

A LEADING VOICE FOR CAREGIVERS

All sessions are available on your choice of Zoom or telephone only!

Date	Time	Topic
Wednesday October 8	**11:00 am Eastern 10:00 am Central 9:00 am Mountain 8:00 am Pacific**	**Alzheimer's and Dementia Research Update with Elliot Montgomery Sklar, PhD and Lucy Barylak, MSW** *This session will explore all the newest research and information in a way that is easy to understand for caregivers.*
Tuesday October 14	**11:00 am Eastern 10:00 am Central 9:00 am Mountain 8:00 am Pacific**	**Comunicación compasiva y eficaz con una persona que vive con demencia con Tia Viera** *Aprenda las mejores maneras de comunicarse con personas que viven con demencia. Hablaremos sobre cómo el lenguaje y la comprensión cambian debido a los efectos de la demencia, y cómo la comunicación no verbal y la terapia de validación son las formas más eficaces y compasivas de conectar con sus seres queridos.*
Thursday October 16	**1:00 pm Eastern 12:00 pm Central 11:00 am Mountain 10:00 am Pacific**	**Managing Physical and Emotional Expressions with Hollie Lowe, MA, LPC, NCC** *In this program, you'll learn why these behaviors occur and how to effectively prevent, redirect, and respond to them. This session offers practical, supportive strategies for families, caregivers, and professionals alike.*
Tuesday October 21	**12:00 pm Eastern 11:00 am Central 10:00 am Mountain 9:00 am Pacific**	**The Three Most Common Questions Caregivers Ask About Guilt with Barry J. Jacobs, PsyD** *In this highly interactive webinar, psychologist Barry J. Jacobs, Psy.D., coauthor of the recently published book, The AARP Caregiver Answer Book, will share three of the most common questions that caregivers ask about guilt and will provide some possible answers.*
Thursday October 23	**2:00 pm Eastern 1:00 pm Central 12:00 pm Mountain 11:00 am Pacific**	**Shifting Perceptions, Steady Hearts: A Compassionate Look at Lewy Body Dementia with Brandi Hackett, LCSW, C-ASWCM** *This session dives into how dementia-sensitive practices can transform the experience of both those living with LBD and their care partners. Through education, storytelling, and advocacy, we'll explore how stigma, miscommunication, and rushed assumptions can create barriers to person-centered care.*
Wednesday October 29	**11:30 am Eastern 10:30 am Central 9:30 am Mountain 8:30 am Pacific**	**Texas Guardianship: How to Avoid It and How to Prepare for It with Karen Telschow Johnson, Attorney** *This program will provide you the information you need to stay in control of your life as you age. You can avoid a guardianship by preventing it. Karen Telschow Johnson will help us understand Texas Guardianship law to help us when needed and to prevent it too.* ****Sponsored by the North Central Caregiver Teleconnection Program****

WELLMED® CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

A program of the WellMed Charitable Foundation

Register online at www.caregiverteleconnection.org or call 866.390.6491 Toll Free

Caregiver Tip Sheets

IDEA! Strategy

An approach to help you figure out why a behavior is happening and what you can do about it.

IDentify the behavior

- What is the behavior that is difficult for you to deal with? Be specific.
- Can you see it? Does it bother others? When does it happen? Who's around when it occurs?

Explore what may be causing the behavior

Understand the cause of the behavior

- **HEALTH:** Is the person taking a new medication, getting sick, or in pain?
- **ENVIRONMENT:** Is it too noisy? Is it too hot? Is the place unfamiliar?
- **TASK:** Is the activity too hard for them now? Are there too many steps? Is it something new?
- **COMMUNICATION:** Is it hard for the person to understand what you are saying?

Understand the meaning of the behavior to the person

- Does the person feel confused, scared, nervous, unhappy, or bored?
- Does the person feel like they are being treated like a child?
- Are there things that remind the person of something that they used to do when they were younger like go to work or pick up the children from school?

Adjust what can be done

You are the one who will need to change, the person cannot. Try different things. Pay attention to the person's feelings. Practice being calm, gentle, and reassuring.

- address what is causing the behavior
  - keep tasks and activities simple
  - keep the home as calm as possible
  - speak slowly and gently — try not to say too much at once
  - do not argue — agree and comfort the person whether they are right or wrong
  - find meaningful, simple activities so the person isn't bored
- distract or redirect by:
  - offering something they like to eat
  - watching a TV show or listening to music
  - asking for their help with a simple activity
  - leading them to a different room
- accept the behavior
  - some behaviors you may need to accept rather than change
  - if there are no safety concerns and it doesn't bother the person, you may need to find ways to live with it

Alzheimer's LOS ANGELES
844.HELP.ALZ
AlzheimersLA.org

Supported by DHHS, ACL (#90AL0002-01-00)

SHIP
State Health Insurance Assistance Program
Navigating Medicare

Area Agency on Aging Coastal Bend

Coastal Bend Aging & Disability Resource Center
An Initiative of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Free Medicare Open Enrollment & Advance Directives Clinic

Is Your Prescription Drug Plan or Advantage Plan the Right Plan for You?

Would You Like Assistance With Advance Directives?

Date: Thursday October 23, 2025
Time: 12:30 PM – 4:00 PM
Location: Lindale Senior Center
3135 Swantner
Corpus Christi, TX 78404

What to Bring For Medicare Comparisons:

- Valid ID or Driver's License
- Medicare Card
- Current Insurance Card
- List of Current Medications (including dosage) or All Medications for Review

For more information about this FREE EVENT, call the Area Agency on Aging of the Coastal Bend at: 361-883-3935 or 1-800-252-9240

The "BENEFITS COUNSELING PROGRAM" is a service through the Area Agency on Aging / Coastal Bend Aging & Disability Resource Center (AAA/CBADRC), which are programs of the Coastal Bend Council of Governments (CBCOG) The Area Agency on Aging is funded in part by Texas Health and Human Services

SHIP
State Health Insurance Assistance Program
Navigating Medicare

Area Agency on Aging Coastal Bend

Coastal Bend Aging & Disability Resource Center
An Initiative of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Free Medicare Open Enrollment & Advance Directives Clinic

Is Your Prescription Drug Plan or Advantage Plan the Right Plan for You?

Would You Like Assistance With Advance Directives?

Date: Friday October 24, 2025
Time: 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM
Location: YWCA
4601 Corona Dr.
Corpus Christi, TX 78411

What to Bring For Medicare Comparisons:

- Valid ID or Driver's License
- Medicare Card
- Current Insurance Card
- List of Current Medications (including dosage) or All Medications for Review

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Answers on Aging™
Financial Exploitation

Safeguarding Your Money & Property

n4a

advocacy | action | answers on aging

Financial exploitation, also known as financial abuse, occurs when someone illegally or improperly uses your money or property for their own benefit. It is a threat to the health, safety, dignity and independence of older adults, but there are steps you can take to prevent it from happening to you.

What Are the Signs of Financial Exploitation?

You, your family and friends, and your bank or other financial institution might notice the common warning signs that may indicate that you are being exploited. These signs include:

- Financial activity that is inconsistent with your financial history or habits and may exceed your means, such as increased or unexplained credit card activity, withdrawals in spite of penalties or newly authorized individuals given access to your accounts
- A caregiver or other trusted financial advisor refuses to use your funds for necessary expenses, care or medical treatment for you
- A caregiver or other trusted advisor who has access to your finances refuses or is reluctant to discuss your finances with you or uses your money to satisfy their personal desires, such as cars, TVs or trips that are not purchases you planned for or budgeted
- Being asked to sign documents you have not read or don't fully understand
- Changes made to your property title, deeds, mortgages, Power of Attorney documents, wills, trusts or other financial-related documents for reasons you don't understand and didn't intentionally authorize
- Individuals threatening to place you in a long-term care facility as a way to control you or maintain access to your finances
- Suspicion that your food or medication may have been altered or withheld, causing you to become unusually weak, disoriented or compliant
- Feelings of being under threat of harm, neglect or abandonment if you do not agree to financial arrangements presented by someone with the power to harm you
- Being asked to take on financial responsibilities for someone else without regard for your own needs or financial ability to do so

Types of abuse:

Exploitation: When businesses, individuals or charities use pressure tactics or misleading language to force older adults to make financial mistakes

Fraud: When criminals commit identity theft or con older adults into sending money or sharing personal information

Trust abuse: When family, friends or paid helpers take advantage of a trusted relationship to get money or assets from an older adult

True Link Report on Elder Financial Abuse 2015
www.truelinkfinancial.com/research

Financial exploitation is believed to cost older adults over $36 billion annually.

True Link Report on Elder Financial Abuse 2015
www.truelinkfinancial.com/research

How Do I Know if I Am at Risk?

Anyone can be the target of financial exploitation, but if you are an older adult, you may be at especially high risk of abuse if you:

- Depend on others for meeting many personal needs
- Recently lost a spouse or loved one who handled your finances
- Allow family or friends to regularly handle your finances
- Feel isolated from society
- Have difficulty understanding finances
- Live in a long-term care setting
- Have dementia or other cognitive impairments

What Steps Should I Take to Avoid Financial Exploitation?

- Complete the checklist in this brochure to determine how you can protect your financial health.
- Take charge by doing research and checking references before you hire someone to help you with your finances.
- Talk with someone you trust to help you plan your financial future, including how to create a budget, track expenses, manage bills, balance accounts and check investments.

What Legal Tools Are Available to Help Me Manage My Financial Affairs?

Make it possible for a trusted love one, friend, financial advisor or lawyer to plan for and manage your affairs by giving them the authority to do so using the following legal tools.

- **Durable Power of Attorney (POA)**
  This designates the person you choose to make financial management decisions for you when you are unable to do so for yourself.
- **Living Will or Advance Health Care Directive**
  Known by different names under different states' laws, this document can clarify your health care wishes in case medical decisions must be made for you because you are unable to make them. It also enables you to select the person to make those decisions on your behalf.
- **Will**
  Provides instructions for what happens with your assets (your estate).
- **Revocable or Living Trust**
  Can provide a (changeable) method to have your affairs managed by someone you trust during your lifetime, as well as to distribute the trust's assets according to your wishes upon your death.

1 in 5

older Americans is a victim of financial exploitation and the average victim loses $120,303.

AARP Banksafe Initiative

Financial abuse is the most commonly reported form of abuse of adults, followed by neglect, emotional mistreatment, physical abuse and sexual abuse.

American Journal of Public Health (2010) 100(2), 292-297

What Should I Do if I Think I Am Being Financially Exploited?

You may be reluctant to report a problem, especially if you suspect that a friend or family member is the offender. But it is important to remember that financial exploitation is a crime. You have the right to be safe and secure and not have your money or assets stolen. The following resources can provide assistance:

- **Dial 9-1-1**
  If you feel threatened and believe you are in immediate danger, contact local law enforcement now!
- **Eldercare Locator**
  Call 800.677.1116 or visit ***www.eldercare.gov*** in non-emergency situations. The Locator's National Call Center is open weekdays from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. ET, providing older adults and caregivers with information and local referrals on a wide range of topics, including elder abuse.
- **Adult Protective Services (APS)**
  APS help ensure the safety and well-being of older adults and adults with disabilities who are in danger of being mistreated, neglected or exploited. Each state has an APS program; the Eldercare Locator can connect you to your local APS or visit ***www.napsa-now.org/get-help-in-your-area***.
- **National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA)**
  NCEA provides general information and resources to help you understand, recognize and avoid abusive situations. Visit ***www.ncea.aoa.gov***.
- **Long-Term Care Ombudsman**
  Ombudsmen advocate for residents in long-term care and assisted living settings. Available in every state, they work to resolve problems of individual residents and to bring about changes at the local, state and national levels that will improve residents' care and quality of life.
  Visit ***www.ltcombudsman.org/ombudsman***.

How to Avoid Financial Exploitation Checklist

WHAT You Can Do	HOW You Can Do It	☑ Done!
Stop unwanted telemarketers	Add your name to the National Do Not Call Registry. Call 888.382.1222 or visit ***www.donotcall.gov***.	
Learn how to protect yourself	Read about frauds and scams at ***www.stopfraud.gov/protect.html***.	
Avoid isolation	Keep in touch with others, take up a hobby, visit friends & family, volunteer or visit a senior center.	
Protect your information	Do not share personal information with anyone you do not know and trust.	
Don't let yourself feel pressured	If someone is pressuring you to make a large purchase or other financial decision, take a break and get advice from someone you trust.	
Trust, but verify	It someone you don't know asks you to "trust me," think twice, especially if they want you to provide them with money, credit card numbers or other personal information.	
Be a skeptic	If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is!	
Get a second opinion	Don't sign any documents that you don't completely understand. If you need help, seek advice from a lawyer or trusted advisor.	
Keep security information secure	Do not provide your Social Security number, account numbers, personal identification or other financial information to anyone you don't know and trust in-person, over the phone or online.	
Leave no trace	Always tear up or shred financial records when you no longer need them. Never throw them in the trash or recycling intact.	
Have a healthy dose of suspicion	If someone you don't know calls or shows up at your door and asks for information, DON'T give them access to you or your information.	
Avoid leaving "breadcrumbs"	Don't leave signs that you will be traveling. For example, avoid leaving notes on the door for delivery persons and don't share your travel plans on social media.	

About the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a)

The **National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a)** is a 501(c)(3) membership association representing America's national network of 622 Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) and providing a voice in the nation's capital for the 256 Title VI Native American aging programs.

Our primary mission is to build the capacity of our members so they can help older adults and people with disabilities live with dignity and choices in their homes and communities for as long as possible. Learn more at ***www.n4a.org***.

About Area Agencies on Aging

The Aging Network is made up of **Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs)** serving older adults and their caregivers in virtually every community in America. Our Network provides services and supports across the spectrum of need, including home and community-based services, transportation and healthy aging, and it is guided by a single vision—to build a society that values and supports people as they age.

To learn more about the AAA in your area, call the Eldercare Locator at 800.677.1116 or visit ***www.eldercare.gov*** to get connected today.

Acknowledgement

We gratefully acknowledge and thank Wells Fargo Advisors for their generous financial support for n4a's Answers on Aging™ | Financial Exploitation public education initiative. Learn more about this program by visiting ***www.n4a.org/financialexploitation***.

Alzheimer's Caregiving: Managing Dementia-Related Pain

By Editorial Team Last Updated: December 5, 2024 4 min read

If you are a caregiver for a person with Alzheimer's disease, you know they sometimes have pain. You may think it is all a part of aging. But you may not know that people with dementia, like those with Alzheimer's disease, are prone to serious chronic pain. In fact, they are far more prone than older adults without dementia. Fortunately, there are ways you can help them feel better.[1-4]

Do people with Alzheimer's disease have more pain?

In all people, aging can bring progressive physical breakdown, resulting in pain. Knees, hips, and lower backs often hurt. Bones weaken and nerves can radiate pain. And chronic pain (lasting longer than 3 months) is linked to many mental health challenges, including:[1-3]

- Trouble thinking clearly
- Negative feelings
- Difficulty being around others

However, there is more to the story. Up to 80 percent of people with dementia may be in pain every day. But research shows that only 54 percent of older adults without dementia complain of ongoing pain. So, it seems that people with Alzheimer's disease experience more chronic pain than other people their age.[1,4]

What does dementia have to do with pain?

A 2019 study looked at the relationship between dementia and chronic pain. They noticed that people with higher pain levels had greater mental decline. At the same time, the more advanced a person's Alzheimer's disease, the higher their chronic pain levels. The researchers did not determine the exact reason for this two-way link. But they did find 3 common denominators.[1,3,5,6]

People with Alzheimer's disease and people with chronic pain both had:[1,3,5]

- Damage in the locus coeruleus – This is part of the brain's pain response system. The locus coeruleus sends the chemical norepinephrine to the body, which carries messages about many things, including pain.
- Pain-triggered brain inflammation – This inflammation causes more pain, plus nerve dysfunction.
- Loss of brain gray matter in 12 areas of the brain – This loss affects the senses and thinking.

What kinds of chronic pain affect people with Alzheimer's disease?

People with Alzheimer's disease experience physical, mental, emotional, and social pain. All of these can be felt as physical pain. And in many cases, the person cannot tell you about them.[1,2]

Types of physical pain can include:[1,2]

1. Past injuries or surgeries
2. Respiratory or urinary tract infections
3. Poor digestion, diarrhea, or constipation
4. Pressure sores or skin irritation
5. Discomfort from poor hygiene or grooming
6. Disease symptoms from other medical conditions

Types of mental pain can include:[1,2]

1. Instability
2. Confusion about reality
3. Anxiety
4. Frustration
5. Anger
6. Fear

Types of spiritual pain can include the loss of:[1,2]

1. Sense of self
2. Dignity
3. Sense of well-being
4. Sense of control
5. Hope or future desires
6. Positive emotions

Types of social pain can include the loss of:[1,2]

1. Conversation
2. Companions
3. Family (if they cannot recognize them)
4. Familiar surroundings or living arrangements

5. Activities
6. Economic stability

How can you tell when the person you care for is hurting?

Fortunately, you can learn to assess your loved one's pain, even if they cannot talk about it. Throughout the day, check how they are doing. Things to observe include:[1,7]

- Facial expressions
- Activity and body movements
- Vocal noises
- How they act around others
- Personality or mood changes
- Eating or sleeping changes

Keeping track of what you notice will help you and the care team deal with the person's pain. You can chart their specific kinds of pain with a pain scale. A common scale is the Pain Assessment in Advanced Dementia Scale (PAINAD).[1]

What treatments can help with pain?

As with many conditions, there are both nonmedical and drug treatments to treat pain. Your loved one's doctor or treatment team can discuss the best route. They will consider:[1]

- The person's overall health
- The type and level of pain
- The person's previous response to treatment
- Other medical conditions and drugs they are taking
- Risk of unwanted side effects versus benefits of the treatment

Most often, it is best to try nondrug options first. This is because these options do not require professional help or money. Some nonmedical treatment options for pain include:[1,7]

- Exercise (according to their physical ability)
- Spending time outdoors
- Comforting touch or massage
- Being present with them
- Music therapy
- Aromatherapy
- Pet therapy
- Drawing, painting, coloring

When you are doing these, watch the person's face and body for clues about whether it is helping. Consider using the ALTAR (anticipate, look, treat, avoid comparisons, revisit) caregiving tips to deal proactively with their pain.[1]

If needed, your loved one's doctor may also suggest pain drugs. Typically, they will start with a low dose of a non-opioid drug, like paracetamol (acetaminophen). For severe pain, they may prescribe opioids (oxycontin, hydrocodone, morphine).[1,7]

People with Alzheimer's disease should not take a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) for pain. No studies support their effectiveness, and they can have negative side effects.[3,7]

What is the bottom line?

People with Alzheimer's disease experience more ongoing pain than others their age. The longer they have the disease, the more pain they may have. Even though they might not be able to tell you about their pain, you can learn to recognize it.[1-3]

Your watchfulness, practical action, and daily presence can help your loved one cope effectively with their pain. And they can help you and their care team treat the pain – with or without drugs.[1-3]

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