

# ACTION NEWS



## COVID—19 AND DEMENTIA CARE

On a regular basis dementia is a challenge, it's a challenge for the person who has dementia, it's a challenge for the family, friends, loved ones, caregivers, neighborhoods, communities, cities, states, and the whole nation. On top of that you add a pandemic! At this point it doesn't matter if you think it's real or if you think the whole world is overreacting ~ the fact is with the closures and new rules that have been put in place by the powers that be, day to day life is more difficult for everyone and it's once again more difficult for those who have and those who care for, someone living with dementia.

As we live through this unprecedented time please keep in mind that a person with dementia may be even more stressed, confused, and upset. They may have no understanding why they can't go out, or why no one can come in to visit. There may be some confusion about personal space, shaking hands, and sitting close to each other.

This is a time for patience, understanding, and letting go. People with dementia

should not be orientated. Explaining the pandemic may add gasoline to an already burning fire.

Distraction is the best thing; plan ahead with a game, or movie, physical activities such as walking in place, sitting and stretching. Also it might be a good idea to limit exposure to the news media ~ people with dementia may have a hard time interpreting what they hear and see. What media information they do get might create more insecurity and fear.

If your loved one is living in a senior community, possibly in a memory care unit, please work to understand the rules and the process of the facility. As difficult as limited contact and quarantines are, try and remember these are not created to make your life difficult but to protect your loved ones and yourself.

As we work to find our "new normal", make sure as a caregiver you are taking care of yourself. Use what services you can ~ food, grocery and pharmacy

delivery. Make sure you are asking for help ~ friends and family members who could run errands. Take advantage of FaceTime, Skype, and Zoom, or even have people stand out in your yard and waving! Create a dialog with your doctors. Keep them up to date on any issues you're dealing with. If you are unable to connect electronically leave messages with a nurse or receptionist.

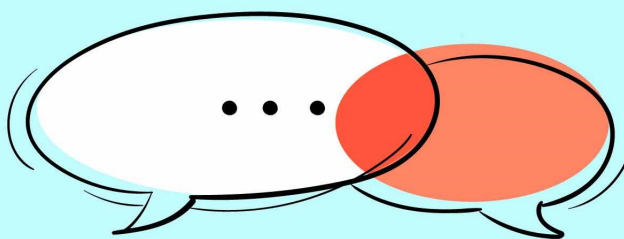
Try and enjoy this time as much as possible. Maybe it's letting things go a little bit and spending the afternoon watching a movie or crafting. Maybe there will be a day or two declared as "pajama days"

Take it all one day at a time and make sure to communicate with those around you. Sometimes a five minute conversation with your BFF can get you through for days!! Never forget this is a temporary situation and hopefully before too long life will return to as normal as it was before!

Now go wash your hands!!

## TIPS FOR TALKING WITH SOMEONE WHO HAS DEMENTIA

FOR SOMEONE WITH ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE OR DEMENTIA, CERTAIN PHRASES CAN CAUSE A LOT OF ANXIETY.



*How you speak to someone who has dementia can be the difference between a good day and a bad one!!*

**AVOID: "DO YOU REMEMBER THE TIME. . . ?"**

**TRY: FOCUS ON YOUR LOVED ONE'S CURRENT SURROUNDINGS.**

**AVOID: "WHAT DO YOU WANT TO EAT TODAY?"**

**TRY: GIVE YES/NO CHOICES. "DO YOU WANT TO EAT A TURKEY SANDWICH?"**

**AVOID: LONG SETS OF INSTRUCTIONS**

**TRY: GIVE SHORT DIRECTIONS. "LET'S GO HAVE A BATH."**

**AVOID: "ARE YOU READY TO . . ."**

**TRY: "IT'S TIME TO . . ."**

**AVOID: "WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO . . ."**

**TRY: "NOW LET'S . . ."**

**AVOID: "ARE YOU HUNGRY?"**

**TRY: USE STATEMENTS INSTEAD OF QUESTIONS.**

**"YOUR DINNER IS READY."**



IN 2020 DEMENTIAS WILL COST THE NATION  
**\$305 BILLION**

BY 2050 THESE COSTS COULD RISE TO  
**\$1.1 TRILLION**

WE NEED TO STOP THIS DISEASE **NOW!!!**

## WHAT HAPPENS AFTER DIAGNOSIS

To be diagnosed with any life changing, potentially terminal disease, is stressful to say the least. With a diagnosis of dementia the reaction can be even worse. A dementia diagnosis can create many reactions ~ the greatest may be fear; fear of not knowing your family and friends, of losing yourself, of an uncertain future. Reactions will vary as many as there are people. What is the most important thing are the actions after the reactions. Just like the grieving process, no two journeys are alike. The best advice to be given is to be gentle with yourself and those around you. Every one of you will need time to process a dementia diagnosis. To work through the ramifications and what life will look like going forward. Communication and patience will help all of those involved.

Get a plan in place. Creating your support and care team ~ who can you confide in ~ who can be trusted with your finances ~ who can be trusted to follow through with the decisions you've made about your care and medical choices. Don't let yourself be completely overwhelmed. Make a list, make a plan. The more detailed plans that are made now means you are the one making the decisions. The more choices you are able make for yourself will be comforting to you as well as your family. With the plan put on paper your family will know exactly what you want. When medical or lifestyle decisions need to be made it will be very easy to do because you will have already made them.

Don't hesitate to ask for help. People, especially Minnesotans, want to be needed and want to help. Unfortunately as Minnesotans we also pride ourselves in being independent and are very well known for never asking for assistance! Work through it and the sooner the better. The person living with dementia and their loved ones are going to need help ~ maybe not today, maybe not tomorrow, but as the disease progresses help will be needed sooner rather than later. If it's your loved one living with a diagnosis, NEVER stop asking if you can help. There will be many times you can even take care of some day to day details without even asking if you should!

Throughout it all please remember none of us are guaranteed tomorrow so enjoy every moment you have been given and savor all you can.

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**There are still  
MEMORIES TO BE MADE  
AND JOY TO BE HAD!!**

ACT on  
Alzheimer's  
Lakes Area

231 W Broadway Avenue  
Forest Lake, MN 55025  
actonalzlakesarea.org  
actlakesarea@gmail.com

**TOGETHER WE  
DO MAKE A  
DIFFERENCE!!**



**Lakes Area**

**Check us Out!**  
[actonalzlakesarea.org](http://actonalzlakesarea.org)

facebook

We are terribly sorry but ~

All programs hosted by ACT on Alzheimer's Lakes Area will be on hold or done virtually until Covid-19 is over.

Please watch our website [actonalzlakesarea.org](http://actonalzlakesarea.org) for any further updates.

Take care, be safe, stay healthy, and **STAY HOME!**



## Coping with stress during the 2019-nCoV outbreak



It is normal to feel sad, stressed, confused, scared or angry during a crisis.

Talking to people you trust can help. Contact your friends and family.

If you must stay at home, maintain a healthy lifestyle - including proper diet, sleep, exercise and social contacts with loved ones at home and by email and phone with other family and friends.



Don't use smoking, alcohol or other drugs to deal with your emotions.

If you feel overwhelmed, talk to a health worker or counsellor. Have a plan, where to go to and how to seek help for physical and mental health needs if required.

Get the facts. Gather information that will help you accurately determine your risk so that you can take reasonable precautions. Find a credible source you can trust such as WHO website or, a local or state public health agency.



Limit worry and agitation by lessening the time you and your family spend watching or listening to media coverage that you perceive as upsetting.

Draw on skills you have used in the past that have helped you to manage previous life's adversities and use those skills to help you manage your emotions during the challenging time of this outbreak.

