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A Conversation with Mark Roberts:
A Person Living with Vascular Dementia

Practical Skills and Techniques

Topics to Cover:

• Medical history and contributing factors
• Getting an accurate diagnosis
• Vascular dementia is unpredictable day to day: what does that look like? What helps?
• Changes in vision: what helps?
• Changes in language: what helps?
• Changes in physical abilities: what helps?
• Changes in relationships- friends, family and community: what helps?
• How have you modified your environment to better support your changing needs?

Diagnosis is Complicated:

- Fluctuations in abilities: can look really different in different situations
- Aphasia (expressive/receptive language)
- Impacts many types of function.
- What exactly is being screened for?
  - If primarily memory, miss a lot of executive function issues
- Physical changes related to stroke
- Emotional lability
Vascular Dementia: Symptoms:
- Symptoms related to where in the brain damage is occurring: not usual progression from complicated to simple
- Fluctuating memory
  - New memory
  - Old memories scrambled
- Confusion/cloudiness
- Executive function
  - Planning, organizing, sequencing

Vascular Dementia: Symptoms:
- Emotions:
  - Highly activated
  - Apathetic
- Personality:
  - Withdrawn or disinhibited
- Mood swings:
  - Moment to moment
  - Crying to laughing

Vascular Dementia: Symptoms:
- Energy shifts
- Physical: fluctuating!
  - Strength: difference between sides
  - Movement
  - Drawing up
  - Coordination
  - Swallowing
- Language/speech
  - Expressive often more impaired than Receptive
Vascular Dementia: Patterns

- Every person is **different**
- Really good days/really bad days
- Fluctuating energy from day to day, moment to moment
- Progress erratic, step-wise
- Sudden changes, small improvement, plateau
- Not all abilities change at the same rate, not necessarily from complex to simple
- Might have long plateaus, especially if underlying conditions better managed

Good News: Managing Conditions Can Make a Big Difference

All you’ve got to do is...Change!!!

World Stroke Day - Modifiable Risk Factors:
- Diet
- Lack of exercise
- Smoking
- Alcohol use
- High blood pressure
- High blood cholesterol
- High blood sugars (diabetes)
- Stress (to some degree)
- Abnormal heart rhythm
Let’s watch some videos!

• Kitchen
• Pantry
• Bedroom
• Bathroom
• Why bathroom works
• Living room
• Dining room to office
• Door to shared family living space

Check out Mark’s family blog:
True Colors of Dementia

https://www.facebook.com/truecolorsofdementia/

Resources:

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