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Why Do They Do That?
Understanding Symptoms and Behaviors of Dementia

Normal vs. Not Normal

Normal Aging:
- Slower to think
- Slower to do
- Hesitates more
- More likely to ‘look before leaping’
- Know the person but not the name
- Pause to find words
- Reminded of the past
- Harder

Not Normal Aging:
- Can’t think the same
- Can’t do like before
- Can’t get started
- Can’t seem to move on
- Doesn’t think it out at all
- Can’t place the person
- Words won’t come – even later
- Confused about past versus now
- Very different

So, What is Dementia?
- It is not part of normal aging! It is a disease!
- It is more than just forgetfulness, which is part of normal aging
- It makes independent life impossible, eventually
- It changes everything over time
- It is not something the person can control
- It is not always the same for every person
- It is not a mental illness
- It is real
- It is hard at times
Four Truths About Dementia:

1. At least 2 parts of the brain are dying: one related to memory and another part
2. It is chronic – can’t be fixed
3. It is progressive – it gets worse
4. It is terminal – it will kill, eventually
Hippocampus
Big Changes:
• Learn and remember
• Way-finding
• Passage of time

Understanding Language – Big Change

Changes in Language Skills
• Vocabulary
• Comprehension
• Speech Production

Hearing Sound – Not Changed
Sensory Strip
Motor Strip
White Matter
Connections: Big Changes

Automatic Speech
Rhythm – Music
Expletives: Preserved

Formal Speech
and Language
Center: Huge Changes

Executive Control
Center Changes:

- Being logical, reasonable, rational
- Controlling impulses
- Making decisions
- Initiating, sequencing, terminating, transitioning
- Being self-aware
- Seeing other perspectives

Vision Center – Big Changes
Dementia does not equal Alzheimer's does not equal Memory Problems
### Positron Emission Tomography (PET)

**Alzheimers Disease Progression vs. Normal Brains:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Normal</th>
<th>Early Alzheimers</th>
<th>Late Alzheimers</th>
<th>Child</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

G. Small, UCLA School of Medicine.

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### Primitive Brain is in Charge of:

**Survival** –
- Autonomic protective: Fright, flight, fight + hide or seek
- Pleasure seeking: Meeting survival needs and finding joy

**Thriving – Running the Engine**
- Maintain vital systems: BP, BS, Temp, Pain, Oxygen
- Breathe, suck, swallow, digest, void, defecate
- Circadian rhythm
- Infection control

**Learning New and Remembering:**
- Information
- Places (spatial orientation)
- Passage of Time (temporal orientation)

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### Believe:

*People with dementia are doing the best they can*
How You Look At Dementia Matters!
- It is not all about loss
- It is not ‘untreatable’
- It is not unpredictable
- Behaviors don’t come out of nowhere
- Dementia doesn’t just affect the person with the disease — it impacts all of us

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