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

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
The person’s brain is dying

Normal Brain

Alzheimer's Brain

Executive Control Center: Emotions Behavior Judgment Reasoning

Storage units - data

Wiring - connecting, bringing data in and sending data out
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

Four Truths About All Dementias:
• At least two parts of the brain are dying
• It is not curable or treatable – chronic
• It keeps changing and getting worse – progressive
• It results in death – terminal
**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>
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G. Small, UCLA School of Medicine.

**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)

**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