

Defining Dementia *and What You Can Do About It*



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Lessons Learned

Weekly Meetings at Memory Care Communities over 25+ years

- ▶ If you've met one, you've met one
- ▶ Dementia knows no barriers
- ▶ Understand the warning signs
- ▶ Human nature prevails
- ▶ Guilt and denial impede action
- ▶ Every problem has a solution

*Thousands of stories from families just like yours.
The struggles, the guilt, the realizations, and the relief.*

Dementia vs. Alzheimer's

Category of Disease vs. Specific Type of Disease



FRUIT

vs.

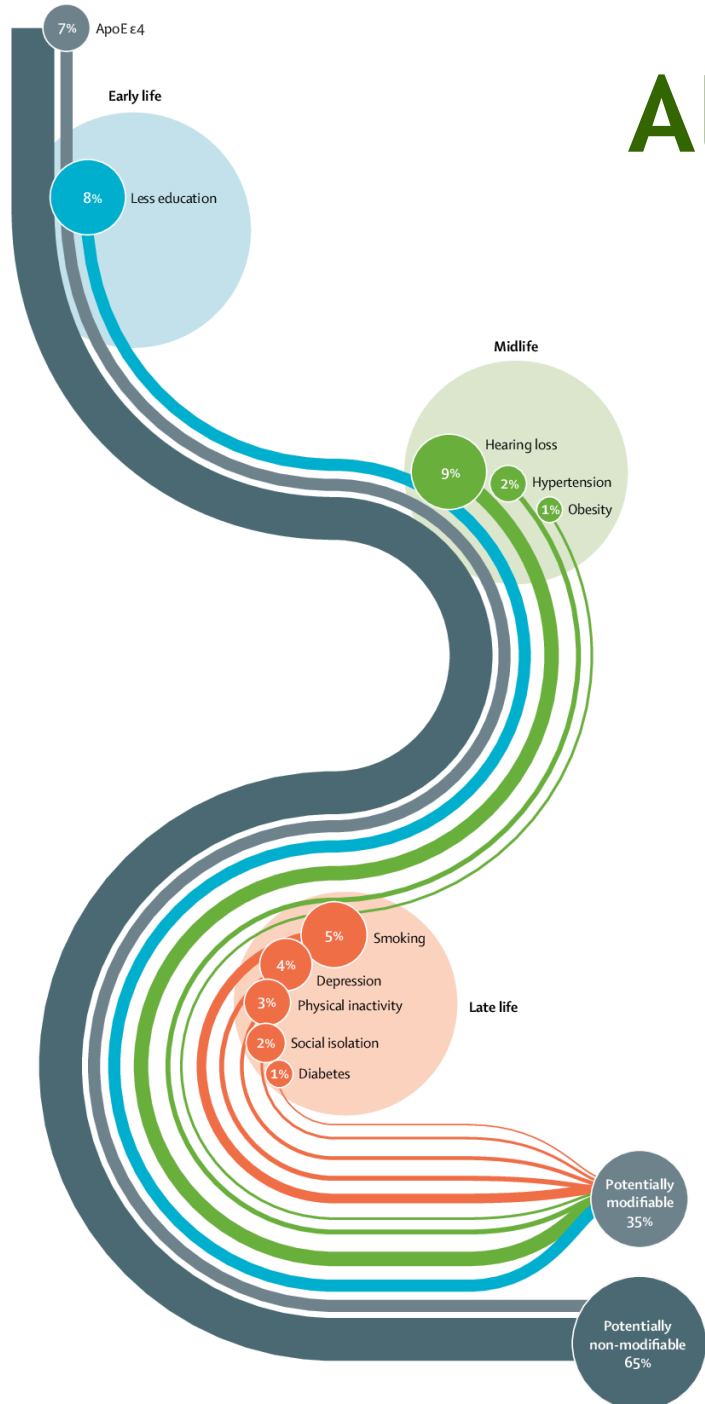


BANANA

Dementia Knows No Barriers

- ▶ Education
- ▶ Ethnicity
- ▶ Gender
- ▶ Age Range is Expanding
- ▶ Economic Status

Alzheimer's Risk Factors



Early Life

- APOE4 - 7%
- Education - 8%

Midlife

- Obesity - 1%
- Hypertension - 2%
- Hearing Loss - 9%

Late Life

- Diabetes - 1%
- Social Isolation - 2%
- Physical Inactivity - 3%
- Depression - 4%
- Smoking - 5%

35%
**Potentially
Modifiable**

Reduce Your Risk Through Lifestyle

- ▶ Have hearing checked
- ▶ Increase physical activity
- ▶ Reduce smoking rates
- ▶ Treat high blood pressure and diabetes
- ▶ Sleep

Is it 'normal' aging or a warning sign?

*Memory loss that disrupts daily life
may be a symptom of Alzheimer's
or other dementia.*

Forgetfulness

Normal Aging

Initially forgetting an appointment or and acquaintance's name; but later remembering.

Misplacing items and needing to retrace steps.

Warning Sign Symptoms

Forgetting recently learned information or repeatedly asking for information – *so much so that it disrupts daily living*.

Putting items in unusual places (remote in the frig).

Accusing others of stealing.

Confusion with time or place

Normal Aging

Mistaking Monday for Tuesday; but realizing the mistake.

Warning Sign Symptoms

Losing track of dates, seasons or the current year.

Forgetting where they are or how they got there.

Decreased or poor judgment

Normal Aging

Occasionally making a bad decision.

Warning Sign Symptoms

Making poor judgments and decisions most of the time.

Being naïve or too trusting.

Less attention to grooming.

New troubles with language

Normal Aging

Sometimes forgetting which word to use.

Warning Sign Symptoms

Halting conversation without the ability to continue.

Repeating statements or questions.

Struggling with vocabulary (e.g., calling a 'watch' a 'hand clock').

Changes in mood and personality

Normal Aging

Developing a specific way of doing things and becoming irritable when a routine is disrupted.

Warning Sign Symptoms

Becoming anxious, confused, suspicious or fearful.

Easily upset at home, with friends or when out of their comfort zone.

Less attention to grooming.

After the diagnosis...

*The pitfalls of guilt and denial
and how to break through*

Caregivers

Drafted By Circumstances

- ▶ Caregiving is not a universal trait
- ▶ Timing/location are not always the best
- ▶ You are NOT alone
- ▶ Seek out support
- ▶ YOU come first—YOU are the most important member of the team

Human Nature is a Strong Force

- ▶ Independence—Autonomy
- ▶ Honoring parents' /elders' wishes
- ▶ “I promised my husband/mother/father...”
- ▶ **They are OK for now (denial)**
 - ✓ Is it safe?
 - ✓ What could go wrong?
 - ✓ Risk vs. confrontation
 - ✓ Could it be better?

Guilt & Denial

Suppresses important information



Paralyzes progress



Pushes away solutions



Builds up...Blows up

Guilt and Denial

The Danger Zones at Home

- Isolation: “Use it or lose it”
- Safety risks at home
 - ✓ Stoves/mechanical equipment
 - ✓ Steps and stairs
 - ✓ Furniture
 - ✓ Medications
 - ✓ Wandering
 - ✓ Scams/financial abuse

Warning Signs: Caregiver Burnout

Physical Health

- ▶ Caregiver's health begins to decline
- ▶ Risks of injury arises: lifting, transferring, combativeness, violence

Emotional Toll

- ▶ Resentment and anger are present all of the time
- ▶ Feelings of hopelessness, chronic fatigue and depression become routine

Breaking Through

- ▶ Ask a trusted friend for an honest assessment
“Give it to me straight”
- ▶ Get a second opinion—take it to heart
- ▶ **Ask for help**—make a few small decisions
- ▶ Create a plan and move forward

What to Look For When Placing

- ▶ Designed for residents with dementia and memory loss
- ▶ An engaging activity program with participatory programs throughout the entire day
- ▶ Staff receives a higher level of training and support
- ▶ Nurses on staff 24 hours a day to evaluate/assess when there is a change of condition
- ▶ Physical plant is designed to be safe and secure to prevent wandering and resident injuries

ActivCare Locations

Orange County

- ▶ **Laguna Hills**
(Opening Soon)
- ▶ **Orange**
- ▶ **Yorba Linda**

Los Angeles

- ▶ **Brittany House**
(Long Beach)

San Diego County

- ▶ **4S Ranch**
(Inland North County)
- ▶ **Bressi Ranch**
(Carlsbad)
- ▶ **Mission Bay**
(Pacific Beach)
- ▶ **Rolling Hills Ranch**
(Chula Vista)

888-MEM-LOSS
ActivCareLiving.com

Words of Wisdom

- ▶ Relief comes in seeking/accepting help
- ▶ Be kind to yourself
- ▶ Don't test or quiz
- ▶ Name the negative—"It's the disease"
- ▶ Little white lies—save the soul
- ▶ You are worthy and deserving of a break
- ▶ Don't question the past
- ▶ Look ahead and plan for change

Resources

ActivCare Communities

[ActivCareLiving.com](https://www.activcareliving.com)

(888) MEM-LOSS

(888-636-5677)

Council on Aging
Southern California

[coasc.org](https://www.coasc.org)

(714) 479-0107

Alzheimer's Orange County

[alzoc.org](https://www.alzoc.org)

(844) HELP-ALZ

(844-435-7259)

Alzheimer's Association

[alz.org](https://www.alz.org)

(800) 272-3900