

In-Home Aides-Partners in Caring

October 2010



WHAT YOU WILL LEARN:

- A description of Alzheimer's Disease
- Symptoms of Alzheimer's Disease
- Changes in a person's day to day functioning with Alzheimer's Disease
- The Aide's role in working with a client with Alzheimer's disease

- ◆ Alzheimer's disease is the most common type of dementia and is a devastating condition that results in the loss of memory and other cognitive abilities, and in the ability to care for oneself independently.
- ◆ Difficulty remembering names and recent events is often an early clinical symptom; lack of interest and depression are also often an early symptom of Alzheimer's disease.
- ◆ Later symptoms include problems with judgment, disorientation, confusion, behavior changes, and difficulty speaking, swallowing, and walking.

Facts about Alzheimer's Disease:

- ◆ Millions of Americans now have Alzheimer's disease or another dementia
- ◆ More women than men have dementia
- ◆ There is not a known cause for Alzheimer's
- ◆ Physical changes take place in the brain- plaques and tangles form in the brain
- ◆ Brain cells which send messages to each other - called "neurons" can not relay the messages as well due to the plaques and tangles

Risk Factors of Alzheimer's:

- ◆ Family history of Alzheimer's
- ◆ Over 65
- ◆ History of serious head injury

Four Quick Alzheimer's Facts

1. Due to memory problems associated with Alzheimer's-people with Alzheimer's will have problems with social skills (conversation, memory)
2. Alzheimer's disease damages the part of the brain that controls orientation, so people get lost
3. The emotional center of a person with Alzheimer's gets damaged
4. The part of the brain that regulates appetite also gets damaged

Alzheimer's signs and symptoms:

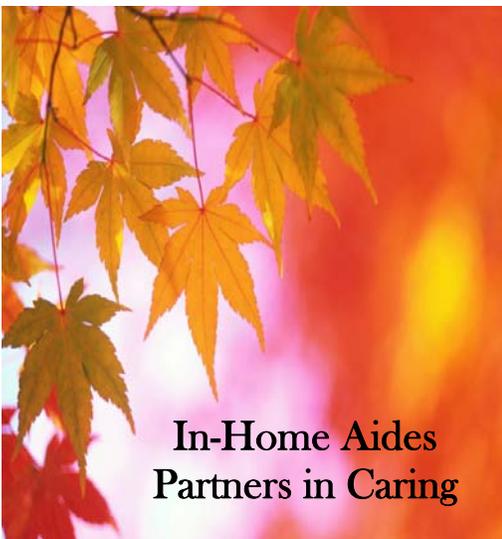
- ◆ Forget familiar things such as people's names, phone numbers, what month it is
- ◆ Lose interest in favorite activities
- ◆ Feel more suspicious
- ◆ Feel stressed when making decisions

With Alzheimer's one's sense of self is often lost- there must be a give and take in providing care to the client with Alzheimer's- What are ways the In-Home Aide can provide care:

- ◆ Remember- providing care for a person with Alzheimer's disease isn't easy
- ◆ Respect small choices- does the client have a favorite robe, shampoo, soap, etc.
- ◆ Keep it simple- one thing at a time rather than multiple items at one time- rapid fire sort of requests can be confusing and frustrating for a person with Alzheimer's
- ◆ Find good reasons- maybe give a good reason for taking a bath such as getting clean for company to come, etc.
- ◆ Slow it Down- engage the client in the task as this may reduced agitation, resistance and combative behavior
- ◆ Don't overload tasks- if you feel like you need more time or you notice the tasks are overwhelming for the client on the plan of care, talk with your supervisor about your observations for possible changes that may be needed

More on the In-Home Aide's Role:

- Suggest that a relative or trusted friend help with tasks such as check book balancing
- Write reminders on the calendar
- Encourage use of a medicine planner
- Keep a list of phone #'s near the phone
- Put pictures or labels on drawers or cabinets to help identify contents
- Encourage client to have a set routine
- Have client write down things they need to remember
- Encourage the use of lists
- Suggest having a designated place for car keys, glasses etc.
- Suggest the caregiver join a support group



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Moderate or Mid Stage Alzheimer's

- ◆ Needs help with ADLs
- ◆ Needs reminders to eat
- ◆ Changes in sleep habits
- ◆ Restlessness or wandering
- ◆ Getting angry, suspicious, or easily upset
- ◆ Trouble recognizing family members
- ◆ Difficulty expressing self and understanding others

What Can the Aide Do?

- Encourage client to stay involved in activities they enjoy
- Help create a scrapbook of memories
- Put labeled photos of family and friends near phone with phone #s written on them
- Encourage daily exercise
- Speak slowly and concisely
- Use chalk or memo board to write down tasks for each day
- Have step by step instructions on how to work appliances
- Encourage the family caregiver to stay involved in favorite activities
- Encourage the caregiver to research community resources
- Encourage the caregiver to get daily help!
- Make client comfortable
- Play music or read to the client
- Use touch to stay connected



For the person with Alzheimer's, activities structure the time. Activities also can enhance a person's sense of dignity and self-esteem by giving purpose and meaning to his or her life.

Planning activities should focus on the:

- Person - Keep the person's skills and abilities in mind, Be aware of physical problems, Pay special attention to what the person enjoys
- Activity - Well-planned activities can improve the quality of life of those with dementia, Encourage involvement in daily life
- Approach - Offer support and supervision, Be flexible and patient
- Place- Make activities safe, Minimize distractions that can frighten or confuse the person

➤ **A planned day allows you to spend less time and energy trying to figure out what to do from moment to moment.**

Resources: Alzheimer's Association; AHHC Caring Connection April 2007; Caring Magazine June 2010

The behaviors of a person with Alzheimer's are tied to changes in the brain- short and long term memory will be affected . With severe or late stage Alzheimer's the client will need help to eat, stand, walk and use the bathroom. The client will speak less and sleep more often and respond less frequently.

Think about this:

- ◆ People with Alzheimer's can only do one thing at a time.
- ◆ People with Alzheimer's have repetitive behaviors.
- ◆ Be sure to keep this in mind while caring for the Alzheimer's client- keep the tasks to one at a time, don't try to do more than one thing at the time for the client.
- ◆ If you notice the client becoming upset with an activity that may need to be changed, notify the supervisor to evaluate the plan of care for any changes needed.
- ◆ If your client seems agitated, they may have pain that they cannot express, notify your supervisor if your client seems agitated.