Health Promotion and Dementia: Approaches and Programs for People with Early Stage Dementia

January 2012
Heads Up:
An introduction to brain health

Risk reduction and keeping healthy
Heads Up: An introduction to brain health

• Dementia is **NOT** a normal part of aging
• Can’t prevent Alzheimer’s, but **may** be able to reduce the risks
• Keep your mind, body and spirit active
• Eat a balanced diet
• Stay connected – socially and spiritually
• *Healthy aging in general is important!*
Heads Up: An introduction to brain health

• Start now by taking action in 3 areas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Mind</th>
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<td>2. Body</td>
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<td>3. Spirit</td>
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• Be realistic

• Revisit your goals

Alzheimer Society
BRITISH COLUMBIA
Forget Me Not
Heads Up:
An introduction to brain health
A Diagnosis of Dementia

“A hard diagnosis to give …

an even harder diagnosis to hear”
Individuals need ...

- Information
- Education
- Support
- Resources
Individuals need to know about …

- the disease and its progression
- strategies for managing the challenges and living well
- emotional and social support – “a journey to be shared”
- personal planning; health and community services
Early Intervention
Connecting to Learning, Services & Support
Online Resources

I Have Dementia

If you have been diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia, this is the place for you to start.

Receiving a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease or another type of dementia can be a difficult and overwhelming experience for you and your loved ones, leading to a variety of feelings including fear, anger, sadness, embarrassment and disbelief. At the same time, a diagnosis may also provide you with a sense of relief, as it offers an explanation for the symptoms you have been experiencing.

There is no right or wrong way to feel. Everyone is unique in how they will navigate this new journey.
HANDY TIPS – WAYS TO HELP YOURSELF

Keep track of appointments & things.
- Put an oven mitt in the middle of the floor to remind you the oven is on.
- Use post-it notes to remind you of important things to do or to remind you how to operate appliances (e.g. steps to warm up food in the microwave).
- Keep a day planner next to the phone to write appointments in.
- Use a weekly dispenser for pills.

Exercise both physically & mentally.
- Read the paper to keep your mind active.
- Take up swimming or regular walking.
- Join a choir, the mental stimulation is good and it lifts your spirits.

Participate in social activities.
- Stay involved with hobbies and interests.
- Volunteer your time to help someone else.

Stay independent & safe.
- Carry your name, address and phone number in every sweater and coat pocket, or buy a bracelet to put this information on.
Understanding & Living with Dementia

- One session workshop
  - What is dementia?
  - Life after diagnosis

- A gentle first step

- Plan – Walk – Learn
Shaping the Journey: living with dementia™

For people with early symptoms and a care partner:

1. The Brain and Dementia
2. Hearing the Diagnosis
3. Maintaining Your General Health
4. Life After Diagnosis
5. Planning Ahead
6. Maintaining Your Spirit
“Coming to Shaping the Journey was like coming home.”

Vlad and Mavis
Shaping the Journey: *living with dementia*™
Support Groups

• For people with early symptoms of dementia

• Model – Information & Mutual Aid
Support Groups

“Hearing others talk about living with dementia and how they are coping has helped me understand what is happening to me.”
INSIGHT bulletin

Finding and Accepting Help

In a previous job I heard a lot about the province of British Columbia, including that what happens in Vancouver or Kelowna, for example, does not necessarily represent the reality in Prince Rupert or Nakusp. With that in mind, when I signed on as Honourary Editor of Insight, I wanted to reach out to others with dementia around the province.

Complementary to that intent is the Alzheimer Society of B.C. - not only their resource centres located across the province, but their website (www.alzheimer.bc.ca) brochures and educational opportunities. Do you know what the Alzheimer Society offers? Are you taking advantage of these resources and information?

There are more than 70,000 people in B.C. with dementia and many of those are fairly recently diagnosed. The message for you is, "You are not alone." To reinforce that, there are many support groups where you can meet others, gain insight and new friends. No support group in your area? The Society has the next best alternative with helpful information and services for you, the details of which are included in this edition of Insight.

I know how easy it is to retreat from activities after hearing the diagnosis, and avoid talking about what is going on. But that's not what we should be doing. There is life after diagnosis and it is our journey of a lifetime. When we travel, we research where it is we're going and avail ourselves of the services of a travel agent. For our dementia journey we should practice the same technique. There are a variety of services available in communities throughout B.C. Every one of us with dementia benefits from informational gathering and socializing. I encourage you to read this bulletin and take advantage of what the Alzheimer Society offers. And strap yourself in for your trip of a lifetime!

Positive steps on the dementia journey

"On look, there's a new for sale sign," I say to Arlene... and the fragrance of the roses grown at this other house is overwhelming."

"Now that we're walking by the park, why don't you frolic in the water a bit? ... We'd better stop here as the fire truck is leaving the station with its lights flashing... Okay, let's go. Good girl."

Walking with my dog Arlene is great fun and every time we go out for our walk we see new things, small new flowers and say "Hi" to others walking by. And as long as there are no children playing around the water park, my bulldog Arlene will take a moment to splash and run in the water. I love my walks with Arlene. It is good exercise, there is some socialization, and somewhere along the way it brings a smile to my face.

And the beauty of walking is it can be done alone, with another person or in a group. You can walk in your neighborhood, around a sea wall or through a local park. Always, though, when you are walking you will see new things, brighten your day, and maybe even make new friends.

Just the other day I went for a walk on a new route with a new friend who also has Alzheimer's disease. We were on a walk along the water where we saw birds (I can't remember the type he said), took lots of pictures, and took time to admire our city and talk about how it has changed over the years.

Of course walking isn't the only way to get exercise, but for me it is a tonic I love taking. Whether you live in Bella Coola, Nelson or Nanaimo you can start your day feeling good with a smile or maybe you would prefer to and it that way. Either way, I hope the idea of walking, along with other suggestions and perspectives included in this issue of Insight, will be a positive step in our journey with dementia.

Jim Mann is the Honourary Editor of Insight. He is an active volunteer who advocates on behalf of and for people with dementia. Diagnosed with Early Onset Dementia in February 2007, at the age of 58, Jim is determined to help make a difference in the lives of people who are affected by the disease. As an experienced public policy professional, Jim provides critical advocacy advice to the Alzheimer Society of B.C. and the Alzheimer Society of Canada.

www.alzheimer.bc.ca
INSIGHT bulletin

• “We value being asked for our feedback and appreciate the stories from people with dementia, tips and especially updates on research.”

• “When it comes in the mail, it reminds you that you’re not alone … It may be the one newsletter that pushed you (gently) to seek support.”
Minds in Motion

It’s about living well with dementia – involved, active, connected
Minds in Motion

- Responds to individual needs and interests for socializing, activity and relaxation
- Is available “closer to home” (ideally, throughout the community)
- Facilitates meeting others living with dementia
- May be shared with family members
- Promotes healthy living
- Assists with access to services and information, as needed
• A fitness and social / activity program
• For people with early dementia and a care partner
• Offered in partnership with community or seniors’ centre
"We were fearful of what we might encounter. What we found was people like us….You are helping us take back our lives, our dignity."
- **Alzheimer Resource Centres**
  for information, education, support and referrals

- **Dementia Helpline**
  1-800-936-6033
  604-681-8651 (Lower Mainland)

- **Information Bulletins**
  - **In Touch** for caregivers
  - **Insight** for people with dementia

- **Education**
  - Healthy Brain
  - Understanding & Living with Dementia
  - Shaping the Journey
  - Family Caregiver Series
  - Additional Workshops
  - Tele-Workshops

- **Support Groups**
  - for people with early symptoms
  - for caregivers
Alzheimer Society of BC
Vision and Mission

Our ultimate vision is to create a world without Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.

The Alzheimer Society of B.C. exists to alleviate the personal and social consequences of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, to promote public awareness and to search for the causes and the cures.