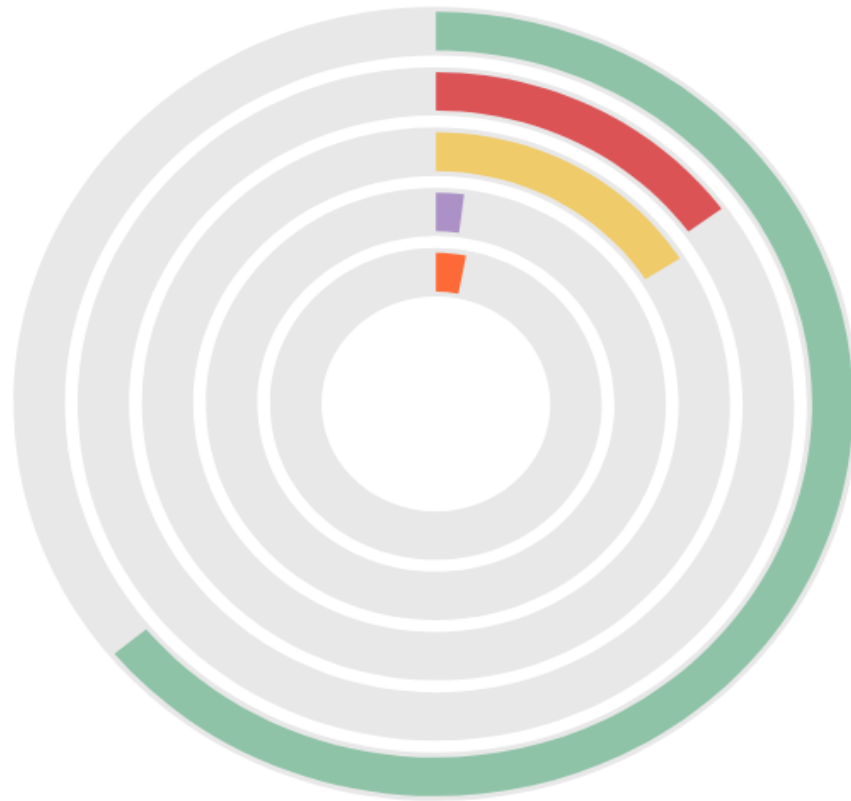


What is Dementia?

A review of what dementia is, its subtypes, prevention and strategies to reduce stigma

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5 forms of dementia



- Alzheimer's
- Lewy Body dementia
- Vascular dementia
- Frontotemporal dementia
- Other

	Canada*
Alzheimer's	64%
Vascular dementia	16%
Lewy Body dementia	15%
Other	3%
Frontotemporal dementia	2%

*Ref: <https://seniorsfirstbc.ca/for-professionals/dementia/>

What is dementia?

Dementia is an umbrella term used to describe major memory loss and severe cognitive decline that significantly affects daily life. It is a **symptom** of different diseases rather than a disease itself.

Alzheimer's is one of the most well known diseases which causes dementia but there are other diseases as well.

There is no cure for dementia but there are ways to slow down the progress of dementia.

There are also ways to promote brain health and prevent the onset of dementia.

Promoting brain health in the early years

There are ways to promote brain health in the early years to lower the risk of dementia later. 3 ways are:

- 1) Going to school (early childhood education) as well as continuously learning throughout life
- 2) Not smoking. Chemicals in smoking cause inflammation in the brain which affects brain health
- 3) Correcting hearing loss in children to promote brain stimulation

Optimising brain health throughout the life span

Up to 40% of dementias are preventable if you maintain a healthy lifestyle. 5 ways to promote brain health through lifestyle are:

- 1) **Physical fitness** – physical activity is known to help the brain to grow and this helps to cope with stress and challenges.
- 2) **Social Interaction** – promoting social interaction and reducing social isolation helps to improve mood, brain performance and memory over time.
- 3) **Mental fitness** – challenging the brain by learning helps with cognitive resilience which is the brain's ability to cope with stress.
- 4) **Positive and proactive thinking** – having a positive outlook on life and focussing on what we can do to overcome challenges helps promote a long, healthy life and helps reduce memory loss and chronic disease
- 5) **Mental health** – self-care activities helps with overall wellbeing and overall brain health over our life span.

Stigma

Stigma is ignorance about a subject that makes people fear the thing that is different from their own life and label it as bad.

Stigma results in people who suffer from dementia feel lonely and isolated. This in turn makes the symptoms of dementia worse.

The twin pillars of combatting stigma are:

- Raising awareness and talking about dementia
- Reducing isolation by creating ways for people with dementia to socialise and get out in their communities

Reducing Stigma by Raising Awareness

Ways to Raise Awareness

- Educate the community through public awareness campaigns (posters, information booths, video advertisements, fundraising activities)
- Provide a website with information and with real life stories of people living with dementia
- Connect with youth by providing opportunities for them to volunteer with people suffering from dementia
- Socialise with people from dementia
- Run publicity campaigns
- Conduct research

Reducing Stigma by Creating Dementia friendly spaces

Ways to Create Dementia Friendly Spaces

1. Provide inclusive (dementia-friendly) fitness programmes for seniors
2. Start up a Memory Café for people with dementia and their caregivers
3. Help support dementia-friendly programmes at local recreation centres, libraries, museums and other public places.
4. Watch your language – reduce using language that belittles people with dementia
5. Provide training to public transportation drivers to know the signs of dementia and to better help seniors on their route.
6. Add symbols of key buildings on street signs (bank, post office, library, drugstore)
7. Provide training to local businesses on serving people with memory loss. After the training, businesses can place a dementia-friendly sign or symbol on their store front to show that people with memory loss are welcome

Ref: <http://depts.washington.edu/mbwc/resources/dementia-friendly-communities>
<https://dementiafriends.ca>

Creating Dementia friendly homes

Ways to Create Dementia Friendly Spaces in the home

1. Adapt every day items so if they are lost, they can be easily found. Some examples are a magnetised phone case and a clip on a wallet or on glasses so they can't be put down and lost but stay attached to the person's clothes).
2. Label items around the house
3. Create a Memory book and have it accessible to family members
4. Create name tags for guests at family gatherings
5. Remove clutter
6. Provide routine (including exercise and routines for sleep)

Ref: *We need to talk about dementia: Panel discussion* by Brenda Main (2021)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lw9ZBE4Ls3s&feature=youtu.be> is the link to the recording of the presentation.

Engaging Students

1. **Student placements:** Duke of Edinburgh and Coop students and for students interested in fields of psychology, music or art therapy and geriatric care. Examples of activities:
 - I. Nursing home visits - doing activities that help stimulate the brain (puzzles, painting)
 - II. Helping seniors with dementia to get to favourite activities or events (concerts, libraries, bingo)
 - III. Participate in a Memory Café
 - IV. Home visits to relieve caregivers – activities could include helping them garden, reading a book together and creative activities

2. **School clubs:** Examples of activities:
 - i. Support group for students with family members who are suffering from dementia
 - ii. Spread awareness about dementia by creating information-style posters
 - iii. On weekends or as an after-school activity, make nursing home visits

Ref: <https://www.closingthegap.ca/four-different-types-of-dementia-the-causes-symptoms-and-treatments/>