

**Building Your Skills for Dementia Care:
A Person Centered Approach**

Communication and Behavior

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About the Alzheimer's Association

Our mission:

The Alzheimer's Association is the leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer's care, support and research. Our mission is to eliminate Alzheimer's disease through the advancement of research; to provide and enhance care and support for all affected; and to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health.

Our vision is a world without Alzheimer's disease®.

800.272.3900 | alz.org

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Objectives

- **Demonstrate the affect of aging on communication.**
- **List disease influence on communication and demonstrate appropriate communication techniques.**
- **State the importance of relationships.**
- **List different techniques for communicating with persons with dementia.**
- **State the connection between communication and behavior.**
- **Demonstrate how to evaluate difficult behaviors.**

Alzheimer's and Related Dementia Refresher

- Dementia is a general term for loss of memory and other cognitive abilities, such as language or judgment, severe enough to interfere with daily life.
- Alzheimer's disease is a progressive brain disease that occurs gradually and results in impaired memory, communication, thinking and behavior.

Effects of dementia disease symptoms on communication:

- Short term memory loss
- Difficulty with expressing himself or in understanding what is said
- Difficulty with reasoning and judgment
- Difficulty with orientation to time and place

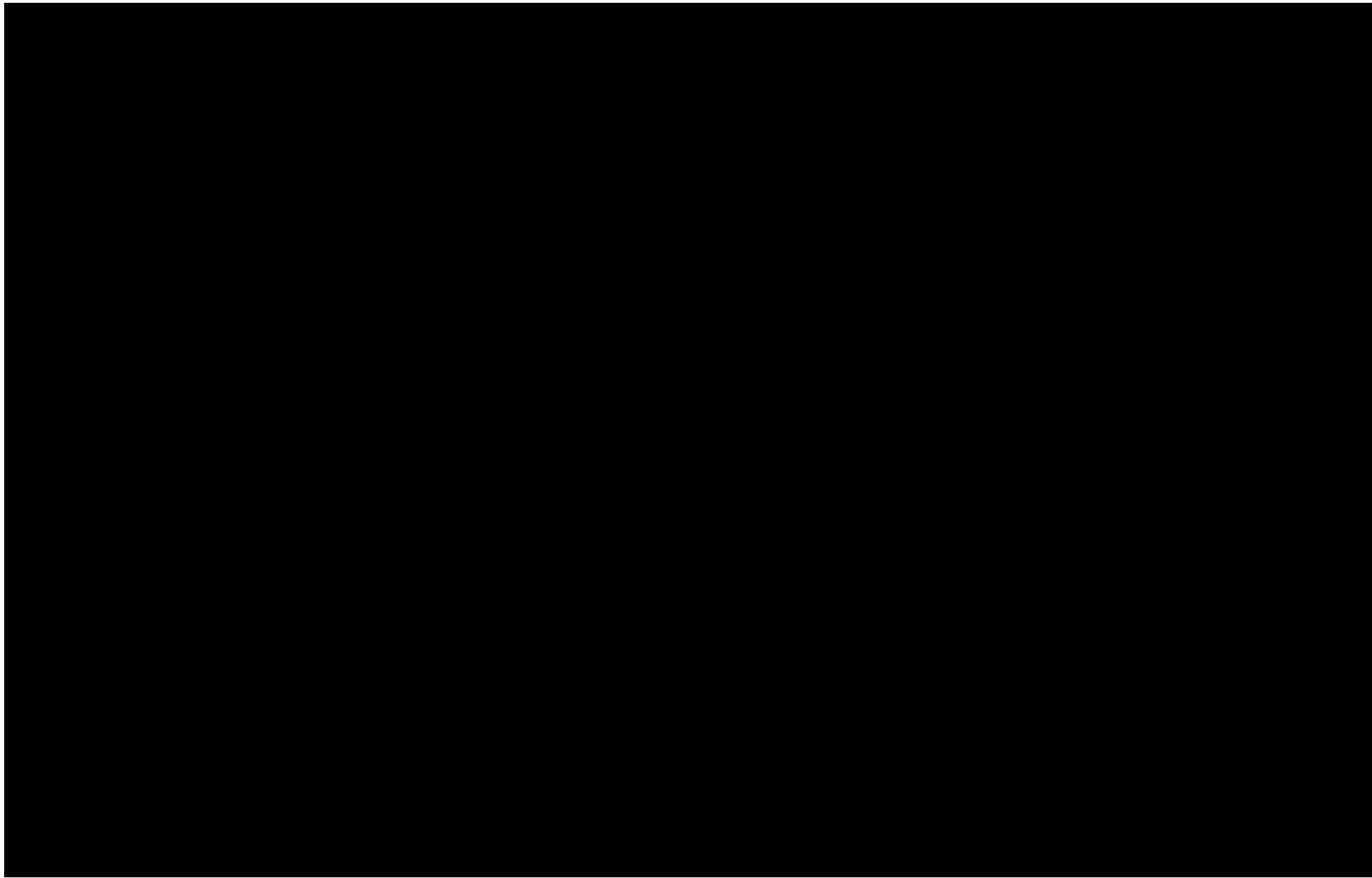
A Person with Dementia may...

- Use familiar words repeatedly
- Invents new words
- Curse or use offensive language
- Has trouble organizing words logically
- May revert to speaking their native language

Behavior is Communication

- What cannot be said by the person with dementia may be demonstrated through actions.
- Behavior expresses fear, frustration, pain; the inability to make unmet needs known.

**What makes us
who we are?**



Communication requires...

- **Understanding the culture of the person you are communicating with**
- **Getting to know the person for who he/she is now**
- **Patience**
- **Ability to read body language and understand the facial expressions as well as the sounds.**

**The burden of communication is on the
communicator
NOT
the person with dementia.**

Communication Types

- **Verbal**

7% words

- **Non-Verbal**

93%

tone, pitch, inflection, speed of voice and facial expression, body language

When communicating, be aware of:

- Your body language and what you are communicating
- His/Her body language and what he is saying to you
- His/Her feelings

Communication is affected by:

- **OUR ability to:**
 - Listen
 - Maintain Eye Contact
- **Observation of the person you are caring for**
- **Attitude- positive and pleasant**
- **Respect for the person receiving care**
- **Inclusion- talk to the person**
- **OUR response to the person**

To enhance communication, it is important to connect with the individual and build a relationship.

The progression of the disease



will affect the way we communicate



with the person with dementia

In the Early Stage...

**Communication does not change
very much.**

**DO NOT
ARGUE or CORRECT**

Go with him/her where they are.

Effective Communication Tools

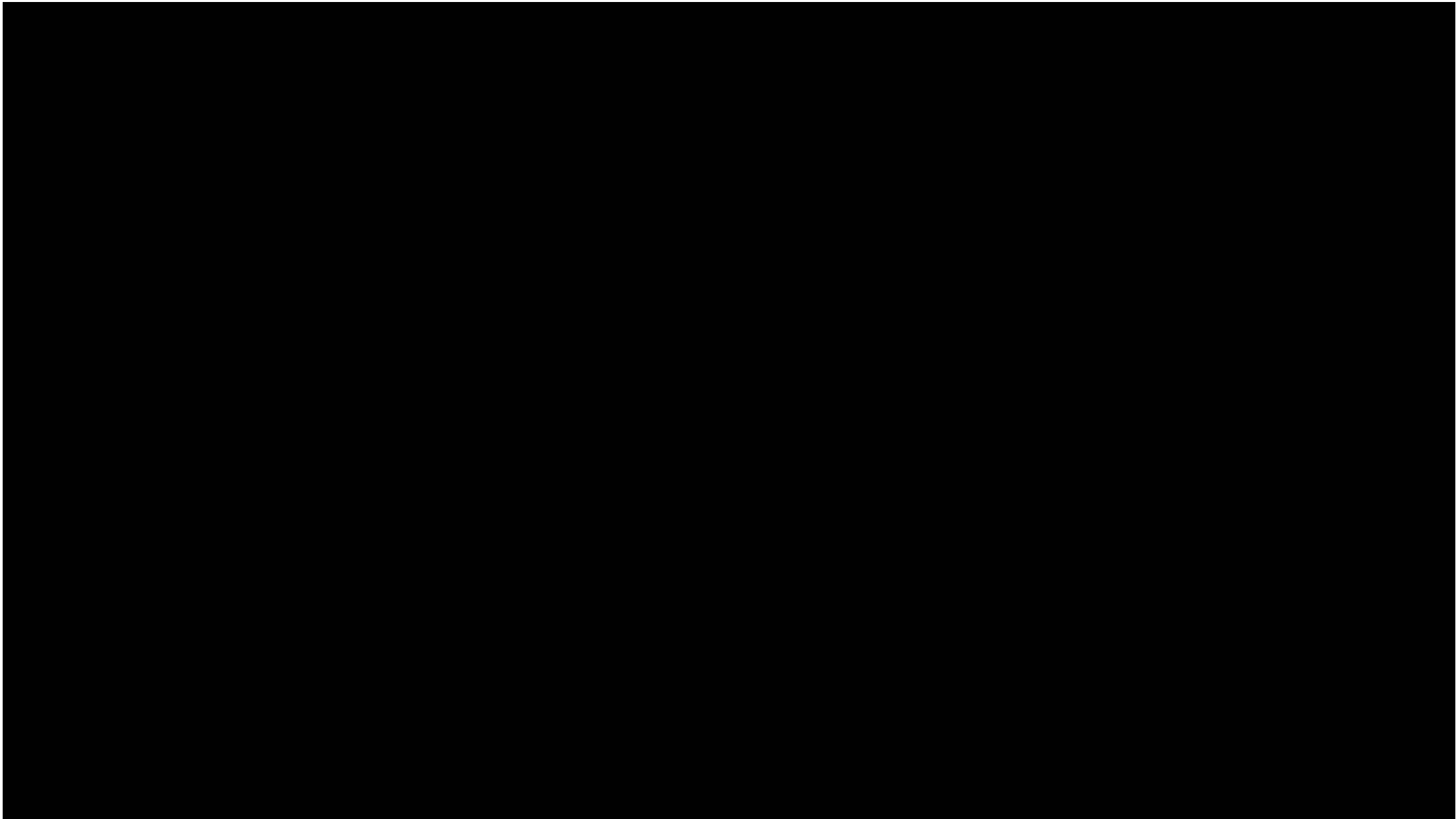
- Redirect
- Reminiscence
- Distraction
- Validation

As the disease progresses, to the moderate stage the person ...

- May have greater difficulty understanding what is being said.
- May lose impulse control... may use curse words.
- No longer understands... he may become agitated or respond with a blank stare.

In the moderate stage a person with dementia may also...

- **Appear to know what he is saying but not be having the same conversation that you think you are having.**
- **Have difficulty finding the right word and make up words.**
- **Insert words that make no sense.**
- **Ramble.**



Communication Techniques in the Moderate Stage

- Eye contact
- Offer your hand palm up
- Get on her leveldon't stand over the person
- Use visual cues or gestures
- Watch her body language
- Watch her facial expression

Communication Techniques in the Moderate Stage

- **Speak to the person like the adult that she is.**
- **Present only one idea at a time.**
- **Ask one question at a time. Keep it simple.**
- **Use positive statements.**
- **Use a normal tone of voice with a pleasant facial expression and positive body language**
- **Respond to the repeated question, listening to the emotional tone not the actual question**

**Communication can cause
behavior to change**

Good and Bad

Behaviors specific to Dementia Diseases

Sundowning

Pacing,
Wandering

Paranoia,
Delusions
Hallucinations

Repetition

Unable to
control sexual
impulses

Hoarding
Rummaging

Behaviors That May Be Triggered

- Aggression
- Anxiety or agitation
- Confusion
- Suspicion
- Resistance to care
- Eating
- Difficulty Sleeping
- Wanting to go home

Questions to ask for possible causes of behavioral changes...

- Is there an infection?
- Is there a medication reaction or toxicity?
- Is the person dehydrated?
- Are her clothes too tight?
- Does he need to be toileted?
- Is he bored?
- Is he over stimulated by the environment?
- Are care partners talking over her?
- Is there a mirror in the room?
- Is the task too difficult and complicated?

**97% of behavioral changes
are due to our
communication
techniques.**

When behavioral challenges are presented, is the communication appropriate for the person?

- Are you using language that the person understands?
- Are you explaining what you are about to do?
- Are you talking too fast or too loud and with too many subjects and verbs?
- Is your body language and facial expression communicating something different from your words?
- Does the person think you are someone else that they do not like?
- Are you being respectful?

For Difficult Behaviors

Evaluate and find out,

**“Whose behavior is the
problem?”**

Use the ABC approach





The person with dementia is in his own reality, go with him where he is.

and REMEMBER.....

Each of us is an individual, influenced by the culture we grow up in and our families. Value her for who she is now, not who she was.

Questions?

24/7 Helpline

- Free Service
- Available around the clock, 365 days a year
- Helpline specialists and master's level clinicians offer confidential support and information
- Bilingual staff and translation service in over 200 languages
- Live Chat available
- TTY Service 866.403.3073



24/7 Helpline

800.272.3900

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Live Chat

Virtual Programs

- Free online e-learnings available at www.alz.org
 - 10 Warning Signs
 - Understanding Alzheimer's and Dementia
 - Dementia Conversations
 - Effective Communication Strategies
 - Legal and Financial Planning
 - Understanding and Responding to Dementia-Related Behaviors
 - And more!



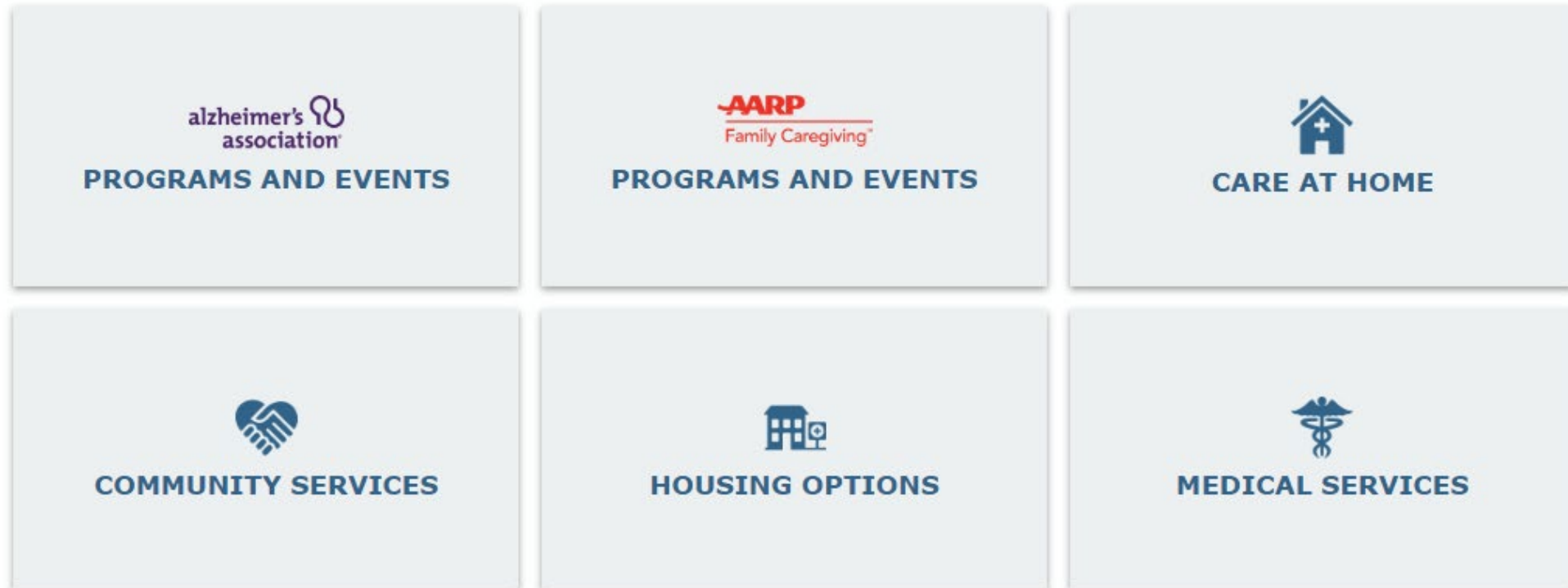
We have transitioned in-person support groups and education programs to virtual platforms during COVID-19 pandemic

Community Resource Finder

www.communityresourcefinder.org

Get easy access to resources, community programs and services.

Based on guidance from local governments and health departments during the COVID-19 crisis, many programs will be offered virtually rather than in-person.

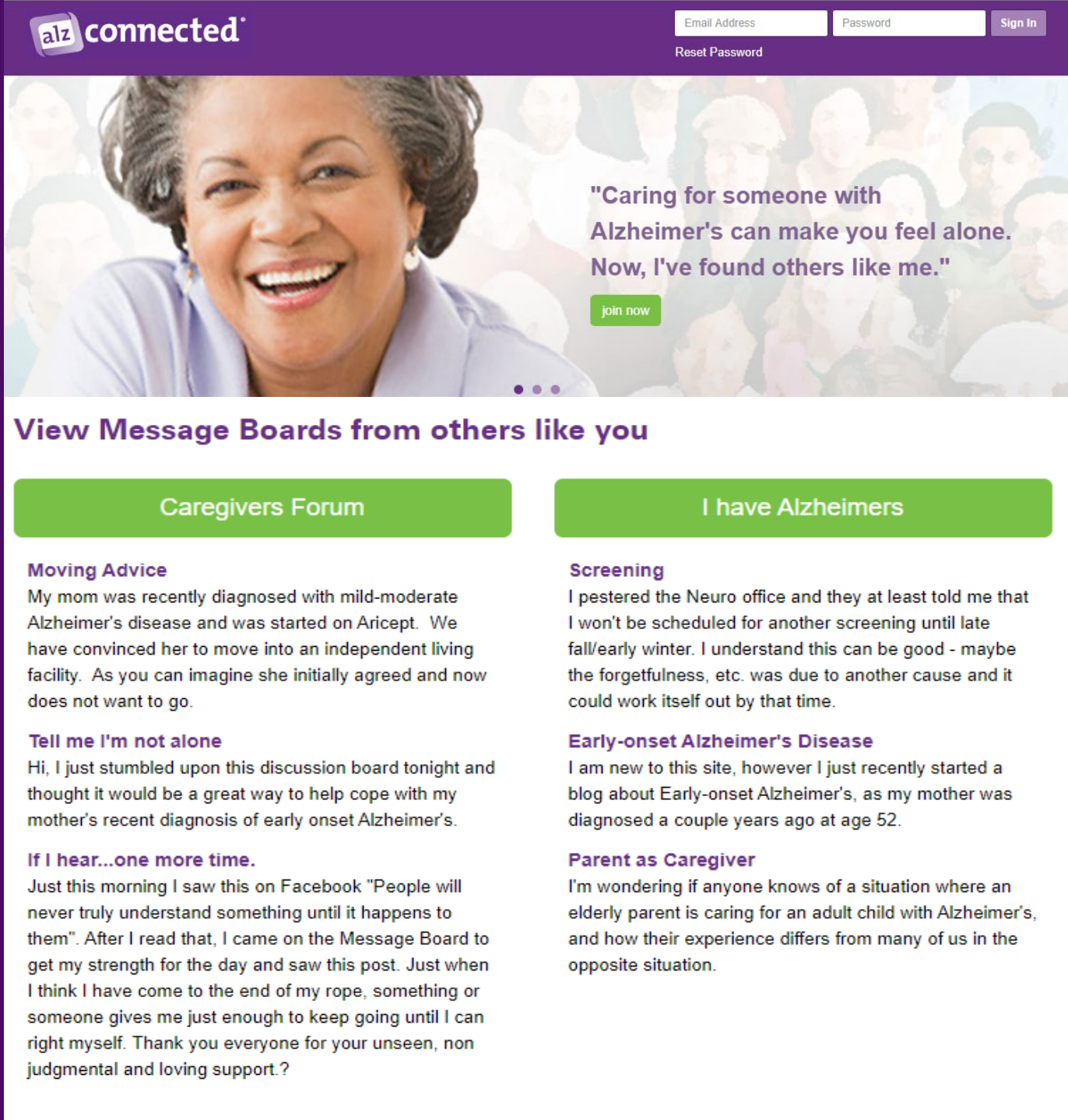


ALZConnected®

www.alzconnected.org

ALZConnected® is a free online community for everyone affected by Alzheimer's or another dementia, including:

- People living with the disease
- Caregivers
- Family members
- Friends
- Individuals who have lost someone to Alzheimer's or another dementia



The image shows a screenshot of the ALZConnected website. At the top, there is a purple navigation bar with the 'alz connected' logo on the left and three input fields on the right: 'Email Address', 'Password', and 'Sign In'. Below the 'Password' field is a 'Reset Password' link. The main content area features a large, smiling woman in a light blue shirt. To her right, a quote reads: "Caring for someone with Alzheimer's can make you feel alone. Now, I've found others like me." Below the quote is a green 'join now' button. Underneath this is a section titled 'View Message Boards from others like you' with two green buttons: 'Caregivers Forum' and 'I have Alzheimers'. Below these buttons are three columns of text, each starting with a bold heading: 'Moving Advice', 'Tell me I'm not alone', and 'If I hear...one more time.' in the first column; 'Screening', 'Early-onset Alzheimer's Disease', and 'Parent as Caregiver' in the second column. Each heading is followed by a paragraph of text.

alz connected

Email Address Password Sign In

Reset Password

"Caring for someone with Alzheimer's can make you feel alone. Now, I've found others like me."

join now

View Message Boards from others like you

Caregivers Forum I have Alzheimers

Moving Advice
My mom was recently diagnosed with mild-moderate Alzheimer's disease and was started on Aricept. We have convinced her to move into an independent living facility. As you can imagine she initially agreed and now does not want to go.

Tell me I'm not alone
Hi, I just stumbled upon this discussion board tonight and thought it would be a great way to help cope with my mother's recent diagnosis of early onset Alzheimer's.

If I hear...one more time.
Just this morning I saw this on Facebook "People will never truly understand something until it happens to them". After I read that, I came on the Message Board to get my strength for the day and saw this post. Just when I think I have come to the end of my rope, something or someone gives me just enough to keep going until I can right myself. Thank you everyone for your unseen, non judgmental and loving support.?

Screening
I pestered the Neuro office and they at least told me that I won't be scheduled for another screening until late fall/early winter. I understand this can be good - maybe the forgetfulness, etc. was due to another cause and it could work itself out by that time.

Early-onset Alzheimer's Disease
I am new to this site, however I just recently started a blog about Early-onset Alzheimer's, as my mother was diagnosed a couple years ago at age 52.

Parent as Caregiver
I'm wondering if anyone knows of a situation where an elderly parent is caring for an adult child with Alzheimer's, and how their experience differs from many of us in the opposite situation.

Alzheimer's Navigator®

www.alzheimersnavigator.org

Alzheimer's Navigator is a free online tool that helps guide caregivers to answers by creating a personalized action plan and linking you to information, support and local resources.

ALZHEIMER'S navigator®
alzheimer's association®

What do you want to know?

Choose one of these topics to develop a personalized action plan.



Working with Your
Doctor



Symptoms



Safety



Legal Planning



Knowledge



Financial Planning



Driving



Caregiver Support



Care Options



Daily Living

Bibliography

Information for this program was secured from materials made available by the National Alzheimer's Association.

This program was developed by the Alzheimer's Association Chapters of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

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