

BAI BEACON

*The Newsletter from Family and Community Services
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Early Alzheimer's disease: Staying Involved and Connected

When encountering a diagnosis of Early Alzheimer's disease, people have a tendency to focus on the things the person with dementia can no longer do, rather than centering on the many strengths the person continues to possess. Alzheimer's disease (AD) is a progressive, chronic condition. When we support people in better managing their condition, we create an opportunity to place emphasis on living well. The goal is to take care of oneself, carry out enjoyable daily activities and help support people emotionally.

Staying connected to pleasurable activities is critical to the person with early stage dementia's quality of life. Often early in the disease, symptoms of apathy and difficulty initiating and moving forward on tasks are common. This can lead to social or emotional withdrawal and can inhibit the person's interest in favorite activities.

Many folks in early-stage want to stay as engaged and as active as possible, but the person will need support and encouragement to overcome these barriers. Completing activities helps people experience a sense of purpose and accomplishment. It is also important to recognize that early stage AD offers a chance to slow down and create better balance between structured activity and rest periods. It even lends an opportunity to focus on pleasurable interests that the person had not made time for in the past.

Success is often attained by partnering with the person in early stage. This enables the person with dementia to



experience greater achievement. Consider offering to accompany him to a recreational event to help him feel more secure.

With patience and support, positive participation in activities is more than possible when living with early AD. As care partners, we can support engagement in previously enjoyed activities while seeking new opportunities to promote meaning. This requires rethinking the timing, length and complexity of the activity and looking for projects that match a person's current ability level. We redefine our expectations by shifting the focus to enjoyment, not on the outcome of the activity itself.

Our Mission

To end Alzheimer's disease without losing a generation, to set a new standard of care for patients and their families, and to forge a model of collaboration in biomedical research.

Because dementia can limit a person's motivation and initiative, care partners will have to assist the person with AD getting started. Try not to be discouraged if the person with early AD struggles to get interested and engaged in the activity. It may be worth circling back at a different time or switching gears to an alternate pastime. Ask yourself if the activity was appropriate in length, was the person well rested, did the activity play upon the person's strengths, was the environment comfortable and were other participants inclusive and supportive? Did your attitude and approach help or hinder the person with early AD? Try to stay positive, gentle and flexible by encouraging and assisting the person in locating and remaining connected to pleasurable activities.

Seek stimulating activities that avoid too many challenges or choices. Keep activities simple and break down instructions to make sure each step of the task is manageable. Too many decisions can overwhelm or frustrate the person with early AD. Keep crowds and noise to a minimum. For example, if the person enjoyed dining out, consider a smaller restaurant or try going at a slightly off time. If a menu seems overwhelming for her, suggest a few items you know your person might enjoy and allow her to select one.

Work toward a rhythm of daily structure and routine. Locate activities that offer variety in social, creative, cognitive, physical, spiritual and pleasant event components. Select the best time of day for your loved one. If he has more energy in the morning, try a walk. If she seems more focused in the afternoon, try a board game or a craft project.

Meaningful activities may be linked to hobbies or interests that the person enjoyed before their diagnosis. People with early AD often maintain long-term memories, habits and abilities. Try adapting these skills into smaller and more manageable components. Memory loss can affect one's concentration, so think about shortening the activity. For example, if a person enjoyed golfing but 18 holes is overwhelming, consider trying 9 holes. If that is too difficult, try hitting a bucket of balls. It could be simplified further by taking a walk on the green and having lunch in the familiar clubhouse instead. Or, if the person enjoyed reading, consider picking simpler or shorter books with large font, switching to short stories, magazines, take turns reading aloud or even listening to audiobooks.

Activities such as taking a walk, cooking or painting can help preserve dignity and self-esteem. Some of the most beneficial activities can be simple, everyday tasks such as assisting with a meal, laundry or gardening. This can help a person with early AD feel connected to normal life and can maximize feelings of choice and control. Remember, performance and/or completion of the task is less important than the person's enjoyment in engaging in a given task.

Small group activities or support groups can offer an emotional connection with others. Activities allow the person to feel part of the family and community and offer a greater possibility to stay more engaged with life.

Experiment with new activities to that incorporate the senses such as exercise or movement outdoors, use of music, pets, art or reminiscing about pleasurable events or photos. Have a conversation with your person and offer suggestions about things they might enjoy. Planning activities may not be your greatest strength, so consider looking for a community activity or life enrichment program to help support your loved one.

Encourage activities that are failure free. If your person appears involved and happy, avoid correcting her. The ultimate goal is to engage the person with early stage dementia and promote a feeling of success. This approach promotes an opportunity for joy and gratification. Activities can reduce anxiety, agitation, depression and boredom and can also support feelings of independence, social inclusion and communication. Try to keeping a person with early AD active while balancing her need for alternate periods of rest.

With a little creativity, flexibility and patience; keeping the person in early stage occupied and stimulated can significantly improve quality of life for the person, as well as for the care partner. Keeping the person active and involved allows family and friends to continue to focus on the person through a positive lens, while offering necessary structure, pleasant experiences and a feeling of accomplishment.

Have a Question?

To submit your question for future consideration email us at: baiinfo@bannerhealth.com



Ask The Expert

Lori Nisson, MSW, LCSW
Clinical Social Worker, Cleo Roberts Center
Banner Sun Health Research Institute

Dear Lori,

My wife has always stayed busy playing mahjong, helping out friends and neighbors, babysitting our grandchildren and attending temple services & events. Recently she was diagnosed with Early Stage Alzheimer's disease and she has been staying in bed longer in the morning, avoiding friends and family and telling me she no longer wants to attend temple or other social gatherings. She says she is embarrassed about her memory loss and does not want people to know about it. I want to respect her feelings, but I can't help thinking this isn't good for her and frankly it is not good for me either. I am noticing our world is shrinking. What should I do?

Sincerely,
Larry

Dear Larry,

I think you have a right to be concerned. From what you shared, your wife has been a very active person. She has a right to stay involved and engaged even with a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease, as do you! Feeling concerned about social stigma is common with early dementia. It will be important for you to be empathic to her need for emotional support. She may want to talk about how she is feeling with you or in an early stage AD support group. Consider asking one of our Family & Community Services Social Work Navigators about available support group programs to best meet her needs. You may also benefit from a caregiver support group, which can provide validation, communication strategies and offer new possibilities for friendship and socialization. It may be that your spouse is experiencing depression, which can be common in early stage. You should consult with her primary provider or dementia specialist who can assess for and treat this condition if necessary.

You will want to be sensitive to her need for some privacy, but it will be important for both of you to receive support during this journey. Consider meeting individually with a few close friends and family members and use language that is comfortable for your wife (i.e. words like memory loss). Apathy is also common in early dementia. Use directive encouragement for daily structured activities (e.g. "Let's head off to lunch now to meet our friends!") and offer to accompany her to activities that she is able to manage. Consider brief visits around the grandchildren, small gatherings with old friends or maybe even coffee with her mahjong group. Think about inquiring about whether your temple has some simple tasks the two of you could volunteer to help with. Regular contact with family and close friends as well as participation in some faith or volunteer activities may be an important step in helping both of you feel better supported and connected.

Gifts anyone can afford

Have you ever wished you could help but thought you couldn't afford to give? There is good news! You can support Banner Alzheimer's Foundation without impacting yourself or your family. To learn more, please contact us at (602) 747-GIVE (4483) or plannedgiving@bannerhealth.com.



Banner Health®

Banner Alzheimer's Institute
Banner Sun Health Research Institute

Banner Health
901 East Willetta Street
Phoenix, AZ 85006

Activity Care TIPS

Consider getting in touch with a local not-for-profit that may have simple tasks you and the person with early stage AD can assist with: sorting donated clothing or items, creating food boxes, folding & placing letters in envelopes for a mailing.

Contact your local Senior Center or Adult Day Center to learn about programming offered for people with early dementia. Look for art programs, exercise/movement programs, short lectures, and familiar card or board game groups.

Consider the BAI Arts Engagement programs that partner with the Phoenix Art Museum, The Phoenix Symphony B-Sharp Music Wellness, ASU Making's Music, Making Memories and The Phoenix Center for the Art's With Art in Mind sessions. Visit www.banneralz.org/education-events/life-enrichment-programs for more information.

Ask a friend or family member to come and visit or arrange an outing with the person with early stage dementia. Provide helpful details such as best time of day; length of visit or outing; favorite activities the person enjoys, etc.!



For more information on “Early AD: Staying Involved and Connected,” we invite you to join the Dementia Dialogue webinar/teleconference on June 15, 2016 from 12N – 1p.m. (AZ time) with dementia expert Lori Nisson, MSW, LCSW, Banner Sun Health Research Institute.



CAREGIVER EDUCATION PROGRAM SCHEDULE

June/July 2016

JUNE

ABC's of Finding of Dementia Care

There are many options available when additional care is needed. However, it is often overwhelming to know where to begin and how to find the right fit for you and your person. This session will review possible options for care in and out of home; how to make an informed decision and ensure success.

Wednesday, June 1; 12:30 – 2:00 p.m.
Banner Alzheimer's Institute
901 E. Willetta Street, Phoenix **AND**
Monday, June 27; 9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
Pecos Community Center
17010 S. 48th Street, Phoenix
To register, call (602) 839-6850

COMPASS: Directions for Caregivers after the Dementia Diagnosis in Spanish

Over 90-minutes caregivers are introduced to the basics of disease progression, treatment and care. In addition, caregivers will learn to implement 8 practical strategies to avoid many of the common problems that arise when caring for the person with dementia. This class is taught in Spanish.

Tuesday, June 7; 12:30 – 2:00 p.m.
Banner Alzheimer's Institute
901 E. Willetta Street, Phoenix
To register, call (602) 839-6918

Banner Brain Health Program

Learn how lifestyle choices can minimize the risk of Alzheimer's disease and then "flex" your cognitive muscles as you determine how to exercise your brain! This class teaches and provides tips for healthy adults how to use certain activities to help improve cognition, memory and recall. **Cognitively Normal Adults.

Wednesday, June 8; 9:00 – 11:30 a.m.
Banner Alzheimer's Institute
901 E. Willetta Street, Phoenix
To register, call (602) 230-CARE (2273)

Planning Ahead Class for Caregivers

This two-hour class reviews necessary planning for legal, financial and medical decisions for someone with Alzheimer's disease/related dementia or a movement disorder. Included is an overview of community resources and agencies, how to find help and pay for care in the home, community, and residential care.

Tuesday, June 14; 10:00 a.m. – Noon
Banner Alzheimer's Institute
901 E. Willetta Street, Phoenix
To register, call (602) 839-6850

COMPASS: Directions for Caregivers after the Dementia Diagnosis

Over 90-minutes caregivers are introduced to the basics of disease progression, treatment and care. In addition, caregivers will learn to implement 8-practical strategies to avoid many of the common problems that arise when caring for the person with dementia.

Thursday, June 16; 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.
Banner Alzheimer's Institute
901 E. Willetta Street, Phoenix
To register, call (602) 839-6850

Problem Behaviors: Solutions That Work

Dementia affects the ability to manage emotions, carry out daily living tasks, navigate the environment and communicate in a logical way. Therefore "behaviors" communicate a real sense of discomfort for the both the person with dementia and caregiver. This class will address the most common types of behavior problems and pose a variety of solutions that caregivers can easily utilize.

Tuesday, June 21; 10:00 a.m. – Noon
Mesa Red Mountain Library
635 N. Power Road, Mesa
To register, call (602) 839-6850

Keeping the Person with Dementia Occupied

Keeping people with dementia engaged and mentally stimulated is often challenging for caregivers. This class will discuss how to adapt activities as the disease progresses, how to find a variety of stimulating and engaging activities that work in order for the person to have fun or feel success.

Thursday, June 23; 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.
Banner Alzheimer's Institute
901 E. Willetta Street, Phoenix
To register, call (602) 839-6850

Good News in Alzheimer's disease Research

Now is a new era of Alzheimer's disease (AD) treatment and care. As leaders in AD prevention and treatment research, some of the most exciting advances are happening Arizona. Join one of our researchers to learn how you can make a difference.

Wednesday, June 1; 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.
The Colonnade
19116 Colonnade Way, Surprise
To register, call (623) 207-1703

BSHRI Community Lecture Series: ABC's of Finding Dementia Care

There are many options available when additional care is needed. However, it is often overwhelming to know where to begin and how to find the right fit for you and your person. This session will review possible options for care in and out of the home; how to make an informed decision and ensure success.

Wednesday, June 15, 2016; 2:00 – 3:30 p.m.
Del Webb BDWMC Auditorium A and B
14502 W. Meeker Blvd., Sun City West
To register, call (623) 832-3248

Dementia Dialogue Webinar: Early Alzheimer's disease: Staying involved and connected

Successful participation in activities is more than possible when living with early AD. Making mindful accommodations while seeking old and new opportunities for engagement can promote meaning. This Dialogue will review how to tweak familiar activities and seek new options to stay involved.

Wednesday, June 15; Noon – 1:00 p.m. (AZ Time) Register online at www.bannershri.org under events/education and then online education. All webinars are recorded and put on our website 24-48 hours after the "live session."

As Dementia Progresses: Next Steps for Caregivers

This 2 hour class outlines the moderate to advanced stages of dementia, how common symptoms can be managed, and how to cope with changing function while assisting caregivers to find success in their daily efforts.

Monday, June 20, 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.
Banner Sun Health Research Institute
10515 W. Santa Fe Drive
Morin Auditorium, Sun City
To register, call (623) 832-3248

Please turn over for more classes →

BSHRI Free Community Memory Screening

Banner Sun Health Research Institute is offering free monthly memory screenings allowing community participants to screen for potential memory concerns and provide direction to prevention studies, and research opportunities. The memory screening takes up to 30 minutes to complete and is scheduled by appointment.

Friday, June 24; 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Banner Sun Health Research Institute
10515 W. Santa Fe Drive
Building C, Sun City
To register, call (623) 832-3248

Problem Behaviors: Solutions that work

Dementia affects the ability to manage emotions, carry out daily living tasks, navigate the environment and communicate in a logical way. Therefore “behaviors” communicate a real sense of discomfort for both the person and caregiver. This 2-hour class will address the most common types of behavior problems and pose a variety of solutions that caregivers can easily utilize.

Wednesday, June 29; 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Banner Sun Health Research Institute
10515 W. Santa Fe Drive
Morin Auditorium, Sun City
To register, call (623) 832-3248

JULY

Communication Tips to Avoid Arguments

This two-hour class reviews changes in communication as dementia progresses and the common mistakes that caregivers make leading to arguments. A variety of alternative strategies are introduced and practiced during class so that caregivers can walk away with new techniques to immediately put into place.

Friday, July 8; 10:00 a.m. – Noon
Banner Alzheimer's Institute
901 E. Willetta Street, Phoenix
To register, call (602) 839-6850

Planning Ahead Class for Caregivers

This two-hour class reviews necessary planning for legal, financial and medical decisions for someone with Alzheimer's disease/related dementia or a movement disorder. Included is an overview of

community resources and agencies, how to find help and pay for care in the home, community, and residential care.

Tuesday, July 12; 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.
Banner Alzheimer's Institute
901 E. Willetta Street, Phoenix **AND**
Tuesday, July 19; 10:00 a.m. – Noon
Mesa Red Mountain Library
635 N. Power Road, Mesa
To register, call (602) 839-6850

As Dementia Progresses: Next Steps for Caregivers

This two-hour class outlines the moderate to advanced stages of dementia, how common symptoms can be managed, how to cope with changing function while assisting caregivers to find success in their daily efforts.

Wednesday, July 13; 10:00 a.m. – Noon
Banner Alzheimer's Institute
901 E. Willetta Street, Phoenix
To register, call (602) 839-6850

Banner Brain Health Program

Learn how lifestyle choices can minimize the risk of Alzheimer's disease and then “flex” your cognitive muscles as you determine how to exercise your brain! This class teaches and provides tips for healthy adults how to use certain activities to help improve cognition, memory and recall. **Cognitively Normal Adults.

Friday, July 15; 9:00 – 11:30 a.m.
Banner Alzheimer's Institute
901 E. Willetta Street, Phoenix
To register, call (602) 230-CARE (2273)

COMPASS: Directions for Caregivers after the Dementia Diagnosis

Over 90-minutes caregivers are introduced to the basics of disease progression, treatment and care. In addition, caregivers will learn to implement 8-practical strategies to avoid many of the common problems that arise when caring for the person with dementia.

Thursday, July 21; 10:00 – 11:30 a.m.
Banner Alzheimer's Institute
901 E. Willetta Street, Phoenix
To register, call (602) 839-6850

These programs are made possible by the generous support of the Banner Alzheimer's Foundation.

Free Memory Screenings

Free monthly memory screening allowing community participants to screen for potential memory concerns and provide direction to prevention studies, clinical trials and memory clinics.

Friday, July 22; 9:00 a.m. – Noon
Banner Alzheimer's Institute
901 E. Willetta Street, Phoenix
To register, call (602) 839-6850

COMPASS: Directions for Caregivers after the Dementia Diagnosis

Over 90-minutes caregivers are introduced to the basics of disease progression, treatment and care. In addition, caregivers will learn to implement 8-practical strategies to avoid many of the common problems that arise when caring for the person with dementia.

Tuesday, July 12; 1:00 – 2:30 p.m.
Banner Sun Health Research Institute
10515 W. Santa Fe Drive
Morin Auditorium, Sun City
To register, call (623) 832-3248

Understanding Options to Pay for Care: ALTCS

Understanding Options to Pay for Care: VA Benefits

There are options to assist patients and families in offsetting the cost of long term care for those who qualify. Attend one or both of these sessions to dispel common myths, learn eligibility criteria, and steps needed to apply.

Wednesday July 13; ALTCS (10:00 – 11:00 a.m.) & VA Benefits (11:30 – 12:30 p.m.)
Banner Sun Health Research Institute
10515 W. Santa Fe Drive
Morin Auditorium, Sun City
To register, call (623) 832-3248

All classes are free, but registration is required.

To learn about upcoming education and support programs dates at:

- Banner Alzheimer's Institute, visit www.banneralz.org and click on “Events Calendar” icon or call Deidra Colvin, Events Coordinator at 602-839-6850
- Banner Sun Health Research Institute, visit www.bannershri.org and click on “Events and Education” or call Veronica Flores, Events Coordinator at 623-832-3248



Banner Alzheimer's Institute
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