

ENGAGE

The quarterly caregiver newsletter from AGE of Central Texas
"Tackling the challenges of aging with expert solutions"
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Misconceptions About Dementia

By Lisa Daly

Recently, I overheard a health professional describe her own mother as not having "Alzheimer's" but just "dementia." I have heard this many times throughout my career in the memory care field, and it is something that needs to be clarified.

"Dementia" is actually an umbrella term used to describe a severe degeneration in the brain function of adults. This degeneration is progressive and extreme enough to interfere with a person's Instrumental Activities of Daily Life (IADLs) – such as driving, cooking, and managing finances. As the dementia progresses, it most often will affect a person's ability to manage their own Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) – such as bathing, dressing, and toileting.

Alzheimer's disease is just one category under the whole dementia umbrella. There are many types and categories of dementias. I ask families to think of it this way: if a doctor says your loved one has cancer, what would your next question be? "What type of cancer?" As with cancer, dementia is the general term.

Another belief that I hear often is when people say, "Getting a specific diagnosis is not important." However, I have seen that a specific diagnosis can actually be useful to both families and the individual with dementia.

Here is why: each dementia affects the brain and brain cells a bit differently. The behaviors exhibited by the individual, the progression of the disease, useful engagement activities, and medications that may be helpful will vary according to the type of dementia.

For example, with Late-Onset Alzheimer's Disease, we know that the areas of the brain affected first will be those involved in processing, storing, and retrieval

of memories. So one of the first signs that something is wrong will be short-term memory loss.

Also, we know that with this type of dementia, progression of the disease is somewhat slower than other types. So family members may be able to plan for the future more effectively with a specific diagnosis, and also develop activities for their loved one that do not involve new learning.

On the other hand, with Behavior Variant Frontotemporal Dementia, often the first areas of the brain affected are those that play a part in impulse control and emotion. So, one of the first signs of the disease would be a change in personality – for example, someone who has been cautious all of his or her life may dramatically change and engage in risky behavior.

We also know that memory stays intact longer than in other types of dementias. Knowing this can help families emotionally; they don't just see their loved one as doing things on purpose to hurt them, and they can choose engagement that still accesses memory.

The exception to getting a specific diagnosis would be if a loved one is in the later stages of a dementia. If an individual is bed-bound or unable to speak, testing may be too disruptive for them.

Seeking out health professionals who are versed in dementia is vitally important to proper diagnoses, treatment, and caregiving. Ask professionals about their qualifications and expertise in this area. It will help provide a better quality of life for your loved one.

Lisa Daly is an aging, dementia, and caregiving expert with Positive Aging Transitions. She also serves as an AGE of Central Texas CaregiverU class leader. To contact Lisa, call (512) 797-4008 or email lisa.dalyboyd@gmail.com.



AGE of Central Texas presents a

Free Caregiver Seminar

Balancing Life as a Caregiver

AGE's CaregiverU Program Associate, **Julia Davies, MPH**, will give you the tools to help manage your caregiving role and benefit both you and your care recipient.

Saturday, May 21, 2016
10:00 AM to Noon

First United Methodist Church Bastrop
(1201 Main Street, Bastrop, Texas 78602)
The seminar will be held in the Fellowship Hall

You are taking care of a loved one, but who is taking care of you? AGE of Central Texas will host the free caregiver support seminar "**Balancing Life as a Caregiver**" from 10:00 a.m. to Noon on Saturday, May 21st, at the First United Methodist Church in Bastrop.

AGE's CaregiverU Program Associate, Julia Davies, MPH, will give you the tools to help you manage your caregiving role and benefit both you and your care recipient. The two-hour workshop will discuss building relationships across the care team; managing personal stress; recognizing and learning from emotions; preventing and solving problems; and finding, assessing, and using resources.

Participants can register by calling (512) 600-9275 or online at <http://tinyurl.com/AGEMay2016>. The First United Methodist Church is located at 1201 Main Street, Bastrop, TX 78602; the seminar will be held in the Fellowship Hall.

Get More Caregiver Resources, Delivered to Your In-Box!

Sign up for the AGE of Central Texas
Caregiver Communique

Sign Up with Your Smart Device

Or sign-up online at
www.AGEofCentralTX.org



Photo courtesy LBJ Presidential Library

Honorees Announced for The 2016 AGE Awards

The 22nd Annual AGE Awards will be held on Thursday, April 7th, at the LBJ Presidential Library on The University of Texas - Austin campus. The annual AGE Awards recognize outstanding achievements by individuals and local organizations whose leadership and contributions have made a significant impact on the quality of life for aging adults and their caregivers in Central Texas.

The 2016 AGE Awards honorees are:

- **Edith Royal - Willie Kocurek Vital Aging Award:** Honors an older community member who exemplifies the concept of vital aging and who is accomplished in the area of self-determination, self-sufficiency, civic engagement, and quality of life
- **John Henderson- Bert Kruger Smith Vision Award:** Honors a person or organization whose vision has enhanced the older adult community and who has shown foresight and energy in implementing programs, services, or legislation that serves older adults
- **United Way of Williamson County - Philanthropy Award:** Honors a person or organization whose extraordinary generosity has supported work benefiting older adults
- **Susan Stahl, M.Ed. and Nina Mosier, MD. - Rose Professional Spirit Award:** Honors a person whose professional commitment goes above and beyond his or her job description to impact the lives of older adults
- **George Brown - Community Service Award:** Honors a person or organization who has volunteered in support of the older adult community

Past honorees have included The Honorable Gonzalo Barrientos, Liz Carpenter, Wilhemina Delco, The Honorable Gus Garcia, The Honorable Jake Pickle, H-E-B, IBM, the *Austin American-Statesman*, St. David's Foundation, Austin Junior Forum, the Topfer Foundation, and many more. To learn more about the 2016 AGE Awards, visit www.AGEofCentralTX.org.

The Importance of the “Fun/Life” Balance

By Heidi Fischer

Program Director, AGE’s Austin Adult Day Health Center

So many of us get caught up in the whirlwind of life that it becomes really challenging to find time to smell the roses. At the AGE of Central Texas Adult Day Health Centers, we believe that the proper amount of “fun/life balance” is an essential component of wellness.

Respite care provides the perfect opportunity for embracing who we really are without other distractions. The benefits of respite care are many, so let’s look at what respite really feels like:

- The caregiver can relax and enjoy respite when two things happen: their loved one is in a safe place AND their loved one is in an environment that is stimulating and enjoyable to them.
- Their loved one, in turn, relaxes and enjoys being in a safe, caring, and softly dynamic environment.



The environment at the AGE of Central Texas Adult Day Health Centers is cheerful and promotes spontaneity. One of our members – who has Frontotemporal Dementia – has been attending the Austin Center for a couple of years. Her caregiver explained to us that there has been a positive change in her anxiety level since she started attending. If you were to peek in on her during the day at the Center when a band is playing music, you would see her get up and dance, making long, graceful steps and closing her eyes in pure delight. Later in the day, while working on a craft with her friends at the

table, you would see her giggling at a misplaced eye on the snowman.

That’s spontaneity! And spontaneity only occurs in safe and playful environments.

It is this promotion of spontaneity in daily creative play that fuels our activity calendar. We do not disregard the benefits of the physical self, either. One of our members grew up in China, so she is always delighted with our Tai



Chi class. As the lights go down low and the teacher demonstrates the moves, she is so graceful with each posture. On the rowdier side, watch out when we are playing balloon volleyball or bowling!

The Centers also tend to your loved one’s health. Our full time nurse is able to give medications, and she is also assessing the health of our members for any changes.

We invite you to come visit us, and share a special moment of your own. We are open in both Austin and Round Rock from 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Call (512) 451-4611 for more information, then join us in the fun and be spontaneous!



FREE Caregiver Education for Family Members Caring for a Loved One

CAREGIVERU
A Program of AGE of Central Texas

Classes are now forming in Travis, Williamson, Hays, and Bastrop Counties; find a free class near you:

www.CaregiverUcenTX.org



AGE of Central Texas is a non-profit organization that tackles the challenges of aging with expert solutions, offering programs, resources, and education for both older adults and those who care for them. Drawn from the words of our founders, Bert Kruger Smith and Willie Kocurek, our vision is to make aging a shared journey of strength and compassion. Call (512) 451-4611 or visit online at www.AGEofCentralTX.org for more information.

Adult Day Health Care

- Providing daytime care for older adults with physical or cognitive needs in the longest-operating licensed, non-residential Day Activity and Health Service Centers in Central Texas.
- Specialized in caring for individuals with memory loss or dementia.
- Convenient locations in Austin and Round Rock, open Monday - Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
- Full-time nurse at each Center to assist with health monitoring and medication management.
- Activities designed to engage both the mind and body including music, brain boosters, tai chi, and more
- All-inclusive: full day of activities, meals and snacks, and transportation options.
- Accepting Medicaid, Veteran's benefits, or private pay at \$60 per day.
- Call today for additional information and to schedule a free visit:



Austin Adult Day Health Center
3710 Cedar Street
(512) 458-6305

Round Rock Adult Day Health Center
475 Round Rock West Drive, #120
(512) 255-4865



AGE of Central Texas is an Equal Opportunity Provider

AGE of Central Texas
www.AGEofCentralTX.org

Central Office and Austin Adult Day Health Center
3710 Cedar Street, Austin, TX 78705
(512) 451-4611

Round Rock Adult Day Health Center
475 Round Rock West Drive, #120,
Round Rock, TX 78681
(512) 255-4865

Caregiver Education & Resources

- Navigation center offering free personalized assistance and guidance by phone, email, or walk-in.
- Free educational seminars and conferences with free respite services available.
- Free caregiver support group meetings every month in Austin and Round Rock.



CaregiverU

- Free evidence-based courses for non-professional, family caregivers, offered year-round at locations in Travis, Williamson, Hays, and Bastrop Counties.
- Visit www.CaregiverUcentx.org for current schedules.

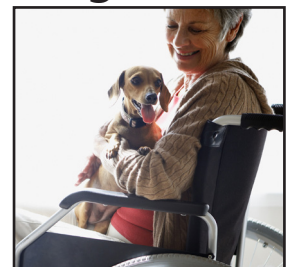
Memory Connections

- Free evidence-informed, weekly cognitive activities and support for individuals with a diagnosis of early-stage Alzheimer's disease or memory loss.
- Four weekly locations around Central Texas with sessions from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.



Health Equipment Lending

- Free loans of gently-used durable medical equipment and free incontinence products available.
- Call (512) 600-9288 or email help@ageofcentraltx.org to request or reserve items.



Peer-Based Computer Classes

- Peer-to-peer technology instruction through low-cost classes and seminars for senior adults.
- Visit www.AGEcomputer.org for the current class schedules and more information.