



# alzheimer's

QUEENSLAND



## Dementia Matters

### A Publication of Alzheimer's Queensland

Alzheimer's Queensland is Queensland's largest not-for-profit community whose primary aim is to maintain the quality of life of people with dementia and their caregivers. We support the desire of most people to remain living in their own home as long as possible and assist families and caregivers to facilitate this.

We aim to do this by offering the following State-wide Information, Education and Support Services

- \*24 hour 7 days per week professionally staffed Advice Line
- \*Community education Library resources
- \*Interactive website
- \*Professional education
- \*Family carer education
- \* Support groups – face to face and telephone
- \* Individualized support
- \* Fact sheets and specific information requests

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### Toowoomba Multi Service Centre

**The Toowoomba Multi Service Centre operates from a beautiful, Queenslander-style cottage in Harristown. It offers secure, cottage-based respite, 24 hours a day and 7 days a week.**

The Toowoomba Multi Service Centre is suitable for both people living with Dementia, and those over 65 seeking opportunities for social and community engagement.

Offering both centre-based and in-home respite care, giving carers and their families a well-earned break to recharge and attend to daily life; safe in the knowledge that their loved one is being cared for by carers trained specifically in Dementia fundamentals, behaviours and response.

The Multi Service Centre has recently undergone a renovation creating a warm and welcoming home-like cottage environment. All meals are cooked fresh in-house in the beautiful large kitchen.

Clients are encouraged to engage in a wide range of in-centre activities and community outings on a daily basis.

If you would like to find out more or arrange a tour please contact the Multi Service Centre on 07 4635 2966



Toowoomba Multi Service Centre is located at **8 Buckland Street, Harristown QLD 4350**

**T:** 07 4635 2966 **F:** 07 4636 4740 **E:** [twbadmin@alzqld.org.au](mailto:twbadmin@alzqld.org.au)



# Psychosis, Hallucinations and Delusions

## What is Psychosis?

The term 'psychosis' refers to a variety of complex neurobiological brain disorders characterised by a disorganisation of thinking that affects logic and the perception of reality. The main symptoms are hallucinations and delusions.

Psychotic symptoms are frightening to the person with the symptoms, and also to family, friends and caregivers. The presence of these symptoms can lead to functional impairment, deterioration of cognitive abilities and caregiver distress.

Psychotic symptoms are common in elderly people with dementia. Research indicates that up to 70% of people with dementia suffer delusions and 49% experience hallucinations.

The presence of psychosis has been linked to an increase in the density of senile plaques and neurofibrillary tangles in the brain of a person with Alzheimer's disease. These psychotic symptoms are usually transient phenomena, occurring in the early to middle stages of the illness and disappearing in the later stages of the disease.

## Hallucinations

People with Alzheimer's disease may experience hallucinations because of the damage to the brain, particularly damage to the frontal lobe.

In Alzheimer's disease, one of the most common hallucinations is seeing people who aren't there, often parents or spouses who have passed away, childhood friends and pets.

The person with dementia has no control over these hallucinations and, to them, they are very real.

Simple but effective strategies to help the hallucinating person include;

- \* Meeting the person's physical needs for nutrition, hydration, rest and safety
- \* Be patient, listen and show acceptance
- \* If asked, indicate that you cannot see/hear the hallucination
- \* Do not argue with the person about the hallucinations
- \* Have the person's hearing and vision tested.

Seek medical assessment for illness, infection, pain, constipation and a review of medication regime.

## Delusions

In people with Alzheimer's disease, there may be an association between the development of delusions and degeneration/damage to the frontal, right temporal and parietal lobes of the brain. These delusions are most commonly caused by paranoia and usually relate to ideas of theft, abandonment or infidelity.

Simple delusions of theft can represent an attempt by the person to explain the loss of articles that have been misplaced. Unable to remember losing the object, the person with dementia believes it has been taken by someone close, often a caregiver.

The person may also experience persecutory delusions that people are after them, delusions of spouse infidelity or delusions of abandonment. Delusional ideas are often distressing and have been associated with agitation or aggression in persons with dementia.

To the person with delusions, they are very real. Do not try to convince the person with dementia that their ideas are imaginary. This almost never works and will only cause frustration.

Hints for dealing with the delusional elderly person;

- \* Investigate any problems that may be true. The person may well be the victim of theft.
- \* Look for lost items, let the person know where they have left it or where their valuables have been stored.
- \* Do not argue. Listen and acknowledge the feelings attached to the delusion. The person may be afraid or sad.
- \* Don't take the accusations personally; the person with Dementia has no control over these ideas.
- \* Seek medical assessment to rule out any medical conditions that may be causing delusional ideas.

If hallucinations and delusions are occurring regularly and are resulting in serious behaviors which do not match the personality or temperament of the person with Dementia, the person may need to be referred for medical or psychiatric evaluation and treatment.



**Help and assistance is available. For further information please contact Alzheimer's Queensland Advice Line on 1800 639 331**

# Activities For People With Dementia and Their Carers

Activities are everything that we do in a day. Activities make up a day. They give us a sense of purpose and help provide meaning to our lives. Activities can promote a sense of self, confidence, and mastery over our environment. A lack of activities that provide meaning and purpose, can result in boredom, depression, apathy and accelerate the progression of dementia symptoms.

The symptoms related to dementia can impact on our capacity to independently perform many activities. As the dementia symptoms progress, individuals will need more assistance actively engaging in everyday life. It's important to note that people with dementia can still actively participate in life and in everyday activities, throughout the disease progression.

The best way to keep the mind and body active is to focus on activities that help maintain existing skills for as long as possible. Work with remaining strengths and minimise weaknesses, plan activities to provide the 'right amount of challenge' and provide 'just the right amount of assistance'.

## Guiding Principles

- \* Activities need to be age and gender specific
- \* Base the choice of activities on past likes and lifestyle. The skills for these types of activities are deeply embedded in the mind and last long into the illness
- \* All activities need to be meaningful for the person with Dementia.

## Considerations to keep in mind

- \* A degree of assistance or supervision is likely to be needed and plenty of time allocated.
- \* Focus should be on the interaction, fun and enjoyment, not task completion.
- \* Repetition of a liked activity gives a sense of comfort, security and worthiness to an individual. For example, sweeping the garden path for hours each day may be boring to the carer but gives the person with Dementia a sense of purpose and achievement.
- \* Understand that everyone is different and activities may need to be changed from time to time.

## Try the Following

Encourage independence by stepping back and letting the person with dementia do what they can themselves – then step in only when needed. Appropriate positive reinforcement may be;

## Personal Grooming

Going to the hair dresser, having a manicure or pedicure or applying makeup. It is important for a person's self-esteem to maintain normal patterns of behaviour and routine.

## **Exercise**

It is not only important for maintaining health and fitness, it also helps people sleep better at night. Walking is cheap and suitable for most fitness levels. A walk in the fresh air each day provides a change of scene and topics to talk about. Other options may include dancing or playing tennis or lawn bowls.

## **House and Garden Work**

Do not worry how long it takes. The person may help to dust, sweep, make beds, do the washing, folding clothes, sweeping, weeding etc. By completing these task the person has a sense of purpose and are able to be engaged.

## **Outings**

Go to the shops, drive to the beach and enjoy some fish and chips are just some simple ways of getting out and about within the community. Try and maintain the person's previous roles.

## **Allow the person the dignity of risk**

Cutting food, pouring tea, stirring in the sugar are basic skills which remain for long periods. Rarely are these tasks any more dangerous for the person with dementia than for the carer.

## **Involve the person in the decision making process**

Where possible, let the person choose activities that they would normally be doing, which they enjoy, and which has relevance and meaning in their life. Activities should provide just the right amount of challenge to encourage self- confidence and mastery over oneself and the environment.

For any questions or concerns you have in relation to dementia and its management, or for specific information on services available in your area and how to access them, please contact Alzheimer's Queensland on

**1800 639 331**

# Out & About

## Reminiscing at Redland Museum

Clients from our Garden City Multi Service Centre attended the Redland Museum and enjoyed a morning viewing their interesting items and reminiscing. There was much excitement and discussion about days gone-by and happy memories shared about time in our youth. Costa's Seafood was the lunch stop that day and Fish and chips consumed with much delight.



## A Look At Time Gone By

Our South Coast Multi Service Centre clients enjoyed a drive out to Beaudesert Historical Museum with all clients enjoying the items on display. To finish the day the clients enjoyed a picnic lunch in a local parkland.



# The Use Of Activity Sheds In Dementia Care

## What is an activity shed.

Within Dementia Care an activity shed is a space designed and dedicated to be used to meet the engagement needs of people living with Dementia. This space should be adaptable to enhance an individuals abilities.

Being part of an activity shed can assist people living with Dementia to:

- \* Feel validated
- \* Provide a sense of purpose
- \* Improve communication
- \* Encourage social engagement
- \* Reduce aggressive behaviour
- \* Provide mental stimulation
- \* Provides a sense of pleasure engaging in activities linked to past occupations.



## What happens in the activity shed

An activity shed is a multifunctional space that can be adapted to suits the needs to the individuals attending. For example there may be multiple activities set up at once, woodworking and crafts.

Activity sheds can be as simple as a table in a shared space, a workshop set up in a suitable undercover environment. Activity sheds are not gender specific and are designed for all attending to participate and be engaged.

### 5 types of people likely to benefit from an activity shed.

- \* People in early stages of their Dementia journey wishing to remain engaged with their community
- \* People who may be experiencing low mood
- \* People who are experiencing social withdrawal
- \* People with reduced communication skills who may benefit from the group environment
- \* Person with historic interest in workshops based activities.

\*information sourced from dementia.com.au



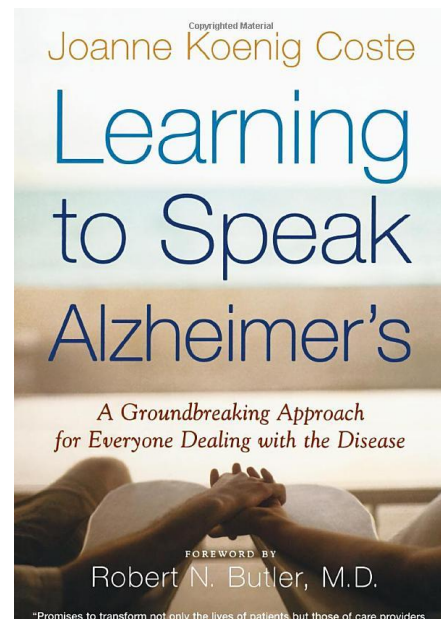
# Recommended Reading

## Learning To Speak Alzheimer's: A Groundbreaking Approach for Everyone Dealing with the Disease

Revolutionizing the way we perceive and live with Alzheimer's, Joanne Koenig Coste offers a practical approach to the emotional well-being of both patients and caregivers that emphasizes relating to patients in their own reality. Her accessible and comprehensive method, which she calls habilitation, works to enhance communication betweenncarepartners and patients and has proven successful with thousands of people living with dementia.

Learning to Speak Alzheimer's also offers hundreds of practical tips, including how to

- Cope with the diagnosis and adjust to the disease's progression
- Help the patient talk about the illness
- Face the issue of driving
- Make meals and bath times as pleasant as possible
- Adjust room design for the patient's comfort
- Deal with wandering, paranoia, and aggression.



*"A true godsend to anyone caring for those afflicted with dementia."—Rudolph E. Tanzi, coauthor of Decoding Darkness: The Search for the Genetic Causes of Alzheimer's Disease*

**PIN ON YOUR NOTICE BOARD**  
**ALZHEIMER'S QUEENSLAND SERVICES AND CONTACTS**  
**WWW.ALZHEIMERSONLINE.ORG**

**Dementia Advice Line**

**1800 639 331**

Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week  
Free Call from landline and public  
phones or email:

[helpline@alzheimeronline.org](mailto:helpline@alzheimeronline.org)

For information and emotional  
support for people living with  
Dementia, families, friends and staff.

The Dementia Advice Line has a  
database of services to provide  
information and referrals. Call for free  
information e.g. fact sheets or  
brochures to be mailed out.

**AQ Rehab**

In home physiotherapy

Occupational Therapy

Speech Therapy

**1800 180 023**

**Care Services**

Our Multi Service Centres are located  
in Brisbane North, Brisbane South,  
Gold Coast, Ipswich and Toowoomba  
and offer the following;

- \* Personal care and domestic assistance
- \* Social support and transport
- \* Allied health assessments
- \* Respite – Centre based; day, overnight or emergency
- \* NDIS support
- \* Home garden maintenance

Residential Aged Care located at;

- \* Garden City Aged Care Services
- \* Rosalie Nursing Care Centre
- \* Windsor Aged Care Services

Home Care Packages at;

Brisbane South, Brisbane North, Logan  
River, West Morton, Darling Downs and  
Gold Coast.

**Carer Support Groups**

Alzheimer's Queensland Carer Support Groups provide information and support for those caring for a friend or family member with Dementia.

Please phone 1800 639 331 for more information or to be placed on the mailing list.

**Fortnightly** 09:30am – 11:30am

Brisbane North – 07 3857 2191    Brisbane South – 07 3349 0875

South Coast – 07 5613 1844    Ipswich – 07 3812 2253

**Monthly** 09:30am – 11:00am

Toowoomba – 07 4635 2966