

CareMate Home Health Care, Inc.
2236 Marshall Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55104

Alzheimer's Orientation

Policy

All direct care staff and supervisors working with clients with Alzheimer's or related disorders must receive training that includes a current explanation of Alzheimer's disease and related disorders along with effective approaches to use problem solving when working with a client's challenging behaviors and how to communicate with clients who have Alzheimer's or related disorders.

Procedure

1. All direct care staff must complete the following training and pass the competency test at the end of the training.
 - A. Meeting the Needs of the Cognitively Impaired Patient.
 - B. The Patient with Alzheimer's Disease
 - C. Managing Difficult Behaviors in Others.
 - D. Working with the Challenging Client.
 - E. Read and understand the following definitions.

Definitions

Alzheimer's is a disease that robs people of their memory. At first, people have a hard time remembering recent events, though they might easily recall things that happened years ago. As time goes on, other symptoms can appear, including:

1. Trouble focusing
2. A hard time doing ordinary activities
3. Feeling confused or frustrated, especially at night
4. Dramatic mood swings -- outbursts of anger, anxiety, and depression
5. Feeling disoriented and getting lost easily
6. Physical problems, such as an odd walk or poor coordination
7. Trouble communicating

People with Alzheimer's might forget their loved ones. They might forget how to dress themselves, feed themselves, and use the toilet. The disease makes brain tissue break down over time. It usually happens to people over age 65. A person can live with Alzheimer's disease for just a few years or for a few decades. More often, however, people live with it for about 9 years.

About 1 in 8 people age 65 and over has the disease. Women are more likely to have it than men. People who get Alzheimer's disease are usually older, but the disease isn't a normal part of aging. Scientists aren't sure why some people get it and others don't. But they do know that the symptoms it causes seem to come from two main types of nerve damage:

Dementia is not a specific disease. It's an overall term that describes a wide range of symptoms associated with a decline in memory or other thinking skills severe enough to reduce a person's ability to perform everyday activities. Alzheimer's disease accounts for 60 to 80 percent of cases. Vascular dementia, which occurs after a stroke, is the second most common dementia type. But there are many other conditions that can cause symptoms of dementia, including some that are reversible, such as thyroid problems and vitamin deficiencies.

Dementia is often incorrectly referred to as "senility" or "senile dementia," which reflects the formerly widespread but incorrect belief that serious mental decline is a normal part of aging.

While symptoms of dementia can vary greatly, at least two of the following core mental functions must be significantly impaired to be considered dementia.

1. Memory
2. Communication and language
3. Ability to focus and pay attention
4. Reasoning and judgement
5. Visual perception

Many people have memory loss issues – this does not mean they have Alzheimer's or dementia. There are many different causes of memory problems. If you or a loved one is experiencing troubling symptoms, visit a doctor to learn the reason. Some causes of dementia-like symptoms can be reversed.

People with dementia may have problems with short-term memory, keeping track of a purse or wallet, paying bills, planning and preparing meals, remembering appointments or traveling out of the neighborhood.

Many dementias are progressive, meaning symptoms start out slowly and gradually get worse. If you or a loved one is experiencing memory difficulties or other changes in thinking skills, don't ignore them. See a doctor soon to determine the cause. Professional evaluation may detect a treatable condition. And even if symptoms suggest dementia, early diagnosis allows a person to get the maximum benefit from available treatments and provides an opportunity to volunteer for clinical trials or studies. It also provides time to plan for the future.