

# Weathering Dementia:

## Loving your partner through all walks of life

### What is Dementia?

Dementia is not a term describing a specific disease, but rather describing a variety of pathologies such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, vascular dementia, etc. Many times, dementia involves memory loss, changes in social behaviors and personality, and decreased performance of complex tasks. Dementia is caused by damage to the nerve cells of the brain. Individuals will display certain pathologies under the umbrella dependent upon the location of the damage.<sup>1</sup>

### Symptoms

- Decreased motor functions
- Inappropriate behavior
- Difficulty reasoning and planning
- Confusion
- Difficulty speaking



<https://daughterlycare.com.au/what-is-dementia>

### Barriers to getting help:

- Guilt
- Change of living dynamic
- Fear of inadequate nursing home treatment
- Pride
- Not knowing where to seek help

### How to overcome these Barriers:

- Education on resources
- Realizing there is nothing wrong with getting help
- Get to know nursing homes in your area to relieve fear

## How to know you need to seek assistance:

- Your health is being adversely effected
- Your spouse's health is adversely effected
- Your spouse becomes outwardly violent to you, him/herself, or others
- Your spouse's personal needs become too great for you to manage independently



### Testimonial

Philip spent 43 years with his loving wife, Susan. He knew her as a kind and competent woman. When his wife was diagnosed with dementia, Philip began to take on the responsibilities of the homemaker, care giver, breadwinner, and companion to his wife. Eventually, the stress became too intense for Philip, and both he and Susan were hospitalized. Finally, he came to the difficult decision to place his wife in a skilled nursing facility, where is still visits her daily.

*"I tried so hard to keep my wife with me. I've never failed at anything I've put my mind to until that. But, in the end, it was safer for both of us this way."*

*-Philip*

### Community Resources<sup>2,3</sup>

- **Area Agencies on Aging**-a national program that assists older adults to care for their special needs.<sup>4</sup>
- **Adult Day Programs**-provide opportunities for socialization and community participation, as well as caregiver respite
- **Home HealthCare**- medical professionals provide minor medical services in the home when needed
- **Assisted Living Communities**-communities where independently living clients can have access to nursing staff, housekeeping, social opportunities, and transportation when needed
- **Skilled Nursing Facilities**- facilities that provide round the clock care, rehabilitation services, social activities, and a permanent nursing staff for patients unable to live independently

### Authors:

Laura Finch, SPT

Sarah Nungester, SPT

University of Evansville DPT Department

Phone: 812-488-1209

Email: pt@evansville.edu

Web: <https://www.evansville.edu/majors/physicaltherapy/>

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