



Comprehensive FAQ Responses for Alzheimer's Support Services

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Understanding Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia:

Q: What's the difference between Alzheimer's disease and dementia?

Dementia is an umbrella term for symptoms that affect memory, thinking, and social abilities severely enough to interfere with daily life. Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of dementia, accounting for 60-80% of cases. Think of dementia as the symptom and Alzheimer's as one of the diseases that can cause it. At WEF, we support families dealing with all forms of dementia, with expertise in Alzheimer's care.

Q: What are the early warning signs I should watch for?

Early detection is one of our key focuses at WEF. Common early signs include memory loss that disrupts daily life, challenges in planning or solving problems, difficulty completing familiar tasks, confusion with time or place, and changes in mood or personality. However, it's important to note that normal aging can include some memory changes. If you're concerned, we encourage speaking with a healthcare provider for proper evaluation.

Q: Is Alzheimer's hereditary?

While family history can increase risk, most Alzheimer's cases aren't directly inherited. Having a parent or sibling with Alzheimer's does increase your risk, but it doesn't mean you'll develop the disease. Our foundation emphasizes that regardless of risk factors, early detection and proper support can significantly improve quality of life for both individuals and families.

WEF Support Services and Resources

Q: What services does the Watson-Ellison Foundation provide?

WEF offers comprehensive support through our "Enhancing Lives and Empowering Caregivers" program. We provide educational resources, caregiver support groups, community awareness events, and connections to local resources. Our "Voices of WEF" (VOW) section shares their vocal ability to emotionally heal families in our community. We also participate in fundraising events like the Walk to End Alzheimer's to support research and local families.

Q: How can I get help if my family member was just diagnosed?

A new diagnosis can feel overwhelming, but you're not alone. Contact us at watsonellisonfoundation@gmail.com or 510-334-6077. We can connect you with resources, provide educational materials, and help you understand what to expect. Our CEO, Anjanette Ellison, shares her personal mission to empower families through this journey, and we're here to support you every step of the way.

Q: Do you provide financial assistance?

While WEF primarily focuses on support services and community resources, we work to connect families with available financial assistance programs. We also fundraise to support local families and Alzheimer's research. If you're facing financial challenges related to care, please reach out to us - we can help you navigate available resources and programs.

Caregiver Support and Stress Management

Q: How do I manage caregiver stress and burn-out?

Caregiver stress is real and common - reducing it is one of our core objectives at WEF. First, remember that taking care of yourself isn't selfish; it's necessary. We recommend joining support groups, taking regular breaks, asking for help from family and friends, and maintaining your own health appointments. Our foundation can connect you with local caregiver support resources and respite care options.

Q: What should I do when my loved one doesn't recognize me anymore?

This is one of the most heartbreaking aspects of Alzheimer's, and your feelings are completely valid. Focus on connecting through emotions rather than memories - familiar music, gentle touch, or favorite activities can still bring comfort.

Remember that even if they don't recognize you, your presence often provides comfort and security. Our support groups include many caregivers who've navigated this challenge and can offer practical advice and emotional support.

Q: How do I talk to children about their grandparent's Alzheimer's?

Age-appropriate honesty works best. Explain that grandma or grandpa has a sickness in their brain that makes it hard to remember things, but they still love the family very much. Encourage children to continue interacting through activities like looking at photo albums, listening to music, or simple crafts. Our foundation can provide resources specifically designed to help families navigate these conversations.

Early Detection and Intervention

Q: When should someone see a doctor about memory concerns?

If memory problems are interfering with daily activities, it's time to see a healthcare provider. Don't wait for symptoms to worsen. Early detection allows for better planning, access to treatments that may slow progression, and more time to make important decisions as a family. WEF strongly advocates for early intervention because it significantly improves outcomes for everyone involved.

Q: What happens during a dementia evaluation?

A comprehensive evaluation typically includes medical history review, physical and neurological exams, cognitive and memory tests, and sometimes brain imaging. The process might seem daunting, but it's designed to rule out other treatable conditions and provide an accurate diagnosis. Having a clear understanding of what's happening is the first step toward getting appropriate support and care.

Community Outreach and Stigma Reduction

Q: Why does Alzheimer's disproportionately affect African American communities?

African Americans are twice as likely to develop Alzheimer's as older whites, often due to higher rates of conditions like diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease that increase dementia risk. Additionally, historical mistrust of healthcare systems and limited access to quality care can delay diagnosis and treatment. At WEF, we're specifically committed to breaking down these barriers and reducing stigma in underserved communities.

Q: How can I help reduce stigma around Alzheimer's in my community?

Education and open conversation are powerful tools. Share accurate information, speak openly about your family's experience if you're comfortable, and challenge misconceptions when you hear them. Support organizations like WEF that work specifically on stigma reduction. Attend our community events, share our social media content, and help us spread awareness that people with dementia deserve dignity, respect, and support.

Q: How can I get involved with WEF as a volunteer?

We'd love to have you join our mission! In 2024, we worked with 200 volunteers who helped us reach 2,348 people. You can contact us at anjeellison@wef.one or 510-334-6077 to learn about current volunteer opportunities. We also host events throughout the year like our Make A Change Event and other fundraising events where volunteers make a huge difference.

Conclusion

These FAQ responses are designed to address the most common concerns families face when dealing with Alzheimer's disease while reflecting WEF's compassionate, community-focused approach. Each answer provides practical information while reinforcing the foundation's key objectives of early detection, caregiver support, and stigma reduction.

The responses maintain a supportive tone that acknowledges the emotional difficulty of dealing with Alzheimer's while providing hope and practical next steps. They also consistently direct people to WEF's specific resources and contact information, helping to build stronger connections between the foundation and the communities it serves.



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