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# Level 5 Dip HE Nursing Studies and Health Dementia

*Trawsnewid Addysg; Trawsnewid Bywydau*  
*Transforming Education; Transforming Lives*



[www.uwtsd.ac.uk](http://www.uwtsd.ac.uk)

# What is Dementia

- Dementia is a syndrome that is associated with an ongoing decline of the brain and its abilities.
- Its diagnosis suggest that several cognitive functions must be impaired

- Brain injury
- Stroke
- Brain tumours
- Long term alcohol or drug abuse

The most common cause for dementia is still unknown

# Alzheimer's disease

- Small clumps of protein develop around the brain cells
- Most common form of dementia
- Over 50% of diagnoses over 65 years are Alzheimer's

# Three main stages:

- Forgetfulness and confusion
- Severe memory loss, increasing mood swings
- Severe disorientation, communication difficulties (such as aphasia)

# Vascular dementia

- Problems with the blood supply to the brain
- Usually occurs in individuals who have suffered a series of small strokes. These may vary in intensity, severity and location between individuals
- Loss of specific cognitive functions and some physical disability

- Localised areas of tissue that is dying or dead, having been deprived of its blood supply because of an obstruction by an embolism or thrombosis.

- **Dementia with Lewy Bodies**

- Small, round clumps of protein develop inside the nerve cells
- These nerves control movement and thinking
- Share characteristics with Parkinson's disease and Alzheimer's disease
- Accounts for 10% of dementia in older people
- Symptoms characteristic of dementia but also aspects of Parkinson's disease and symptoms specific to Lewy body dementia

# Fronto-temporal dementia

- Abnormal protein build up causing the frontal and temporal lobes to shrink
- It is much rarer than other types of dementia
- The frontal lobes are involved in regulating personality, emotions and behaviour thus these all tend to be affected
- The temporal lobes are involved with memory and language production thus these also can be affected

# What is the Outlook ?

- There is no cure
- Dementia is progressive, it gets worse over time
- However, there is plenty we can do to support someone with dementia and help improve their quality of life

# How common is dementia?

- Group Research Task/Coffee: 45mins

# How can we help?

- Calendars/photographs
- Label objects and furniture
- Notice board
- Clock
- Tick lists
- Keep furniture in the same place
- Routine

- **Supporting someone with memory difficulties**

- Reading newspapers
- Using imagery to remember words
- Past memories
- Names of people

- **Orientation to the day and time**
- Choose a time, for example, first thing in the morning to look at the date and time on a calendar/clock etc. Ensure you write it down in large print and put it somewhere obvious.

# Relaxation and mental imagery

- We know that anxiety and depression can cause memory loss thus learning to relax is very important.
- Progressive muscle relaxation, breathing techniques and guided imagery can all be useful in this way.