

# The New Normal

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# You're not alone...*OUR* new normal

- ▶ Nearly 60,000 people living with Alzheimer's Disease in San Diego.
- ▶ More than 100,000 Family members.
- ▶ 80% are cared for by their families.
- ▶ Every 68 seconds an American is diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease.

# Caution: Changes Ahead

- ▶ Biggest challenges:
- ▶ Working (following directions, performance)
- ▶ Driving (getting lost, reflexes, temper)
- ▶ Being home alone (salespeople, emergencies)
- ▶ Incontinence (dignity)

# Day to Day Changes

- ▶ Their need for assistance will increase in the coming years.
- ▶ You will need to make adaptations and adjust your expectations.
- ▶ How many steps to brush your teeth?
- ▶ Activities of Daily Living:
- ▶ Activities, Bathing, Cleaning, Dressing and Eating.

# Educate

- ▶ The better you understand the diagnosis the better you can provide care and plan ahead.
- ▶ Contact your local Alzheimer's Association to obtain resources and information.
- ▶ Attend conferences, classes and a support group.
- ▶ Have a family meeting to inform all family members. Decide on a uniform approach at explaining the diagnosis. Tell your loved one that they are not alone, that many people have this diagnosis, and that there is a lot of life left! If you don't want to use medical terms like Alzheimer's disease or dementia, just remind them that the doctor says they have some "memory problems."
- ▶ Answer your loved one's questions fully, but stress the positive—for example, that memory pills may help, and that research continues around the world to find a better treatment or cure.
- ▶ Stress that you will travel the journey with your family member. Your optimism and positive tone will be comforting.

# Support for the diagnosed

- ▶ Structure
- ▶ Stimulation
- ▶ Purpose
- ▶ Counseling and Support groups

# Create your team...or village.

- ▶ See a geriatric specialist.
- ▶ Seek out support and resources from a social worker.
- ▶ Learn about your respite choices.
- ▶ Put your Legal and Financial house in order
- ▶ Plan for obtaining assistance in the home or at least ensure it's safe.
- ▶ Tour Residential communities so you can make a decision in your time not when you are forced to.

# Embrace the New Normal

Spend quiet quality time together (reading)

Notice the small things (a smile or hug)

Take note of the things that they still can do and make the best of it.  
(yardwork, sorting, laundry)



*There is something that you must always remember,  
You are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem  
And smarter than you think*

*-Winnie the Pooh*