

ENGAGE



Celebrating
30th
Years
of Service!

The quarterly caregiver newsletter from AGE of Central Texas
"Tackling the challenges of aging with expert solutions"

Winter 2017

| www.AGEofCentralTX.org

The Benefits of an Early Memory Loss Diagnosis

For the estimated 34.2 million Americans who are serving as caregivers to an adult aged 50 or older, a recent AARP study finds that approximately one-quarter of those caregivers are aiding an older adult with a memory issue, such as Alzheimer's disease or other form of dementia.

However, among individuals who are living with dementia, evidence collected by the Alzheimer's Association indicates that about half of these older adults have not been correctly diagnosed. This statistic is in line with the nation's 10-year public health agenda, *Healthy People 2020*, which found that only about 35% of Medicare beneficiaries age 65 and older who had a dementia diagnosis were aware of their physician's determination.

An accurate diagnosis of early memory loss can bring many benefits, for both the senior adults and their caregivers. Families who know that a decline in cognitive abilities is caused by dementia are more able to choose appropriate medical treatment, build a care team, and access supportive services. And the process of an early diagnosis is often more accurate, owing to the person's ability to more-fully answer questions and report their concerns prior to the on-set of significant cognitive decline.

"Although there is not a cure yet for many of the dementias, including Alzheimer's disease, an early diagnosis allows a patient to actively participate in non-pharmacological therapies as well as utilize the available medications," says Danielle Grinkmeyer, Program Associate for AGE's Memory Connections early memory loss support program. "These therapies can make a significant difference in a person's day-to-day living, and have a greater impact if they are implemented in the early stages of early memory loss."

Grinkmeyer says another advantage to having an early diagnosis is it provides a greater opportunity for an individual to receive the right advice and support they need while their cognitive functioning is still heightened. Individuals who are diagnosed early can take advantage of early-stage support groups – such as the AGE Memory Connections program – where they can learn tips and strategies to better manage and cope with the symptoms of early memory loss. Additionally, those diagnosed early can also take advantage of clinical trials, and an early diagnosis can provide more opportunities for advocacy.

"An earlier diagnosis also enables the person to participate in their own legal, financial, and long-term care planning, and to make their wishes known to their family members,"

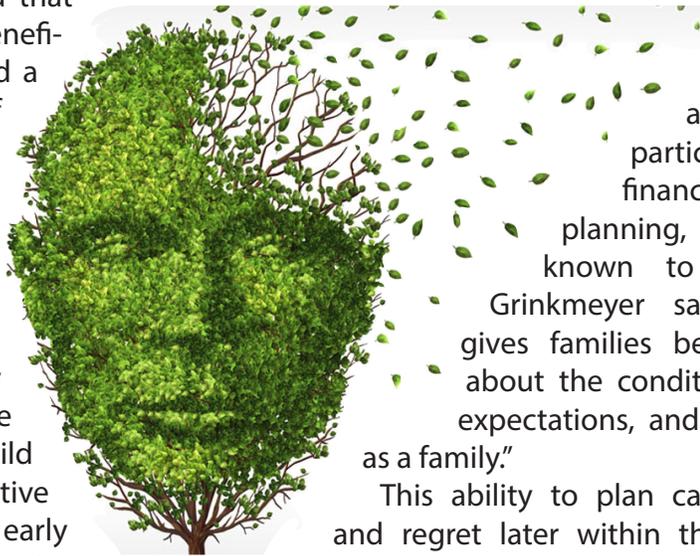
Grinkmeyer says. "An earlier diagnosis gives families better opportunity to learn about the condition, develop more realistic expectations, and plan their future together as a family."

This ability to plan can result in reduced stress and regret later within the family as the diagnosis progresses, she adds.

"Early diagnosis allows the person and family to attribute cognitive changes to a biological disease process rather than to personal failings. These advantages cumulatively result in a higher quality of life for a person living with early memory loss, less stress for family care partners, and more time to appreciate the present and prepare for the future."

AGE of Central Texas offers resources and one-on-one guidance for senior adults and family caregivers living with early memory loss and dementia. For more information and assistance, contact AGE of Central Texas at (512) 451-4611 or online at www.AGEofCentralTX.org.

(Image courtesy Next Avenue)



AGE of Central Texas presents a

Free Caregiver Seminar

Sensory Changes in Older Adults

Join a panel of experts to explore how sensory changes in vision and hearing occur as we age, discuss how to compensate with these changes, and discover area resources that are available to help as changes occur.

Saturday, February 25, 2017
10:00 AM to Noon

AGE of Central Texas will host the free caregiver support seminar **"Sensory Changes in Older Adults"** from 10:00 a.m. to Noon in Round Rock on Saturday, February 25th. Part of the on-going workshop series to help family members effectively care for an older loved one, the seminar will be held at the Allen R. Baca Center in Round Rock (301 W Bagdad Ave # 2, Round Rock, TX 78664) in Meeting Room #3.

Join a panel of regional health care experts to explore how sensory changes in vision and hearing occur as we age, discuss how to compensate with these changes, and discover area resources that are available to help as changes occur.

Participants can register by calling (512) 600-9275 or online at <http://tinyurl.com/AGEfebruary2017>. A limited amount of free respite care for older family members will also be available during the seminar at AGE's Round Rock Adult Day Health Center by RSVP only. To RSVP for respite, please request the service with online registration or call Gailyn Trammell at (512) 600-9275 no later than February 22nd.

Get More Caregiver Resources, Delivered to Your In-Box!

Sign up for the AGE of Central Texas
Caregiver Communique

Register with your Smart Device

Or sign-up online at
www.AGEofCentralTX.org



Mark Your Calendar for the AGE 2017 Caregiver Lecture Series

To provide additional education and support to family caregivers, AGE of Central Texas will once again host its annual **Caregiver Lecture Series**, featuring a series of seminars held every-other weekend in April on three Saturdays, from April 1st through 29th, from 10:00 a.m. to Noon.

The free seminars will cover topics related to the legal, financial, and health-care issues that caregivers often encounter when caring for an older family member.



"The most frequent questions that caregivers have when contacting the AGE Caregiver Resource Center consistently center around legal and financial matters," said Gailyn Trammell, AGE's Community Education Coordinator. "This year's lecture series will again feature local experts who will address those common caregiver concerns, along with an opportunity for participants to find answers to their most pressing individual needs."

Held at the AGE Building – located at 3710 Cedar Street in Austin – the three workshops within the series will be presented by regional experts and are scheduled to include:

- **April 1st: "Five Legal Documents All Caregivers Need to Have"**
- **April 15th: "Long-Term Care and Estate Planning"**
- **April 29th: "Understanding Veterans Benefits and Aid & Attendant Services"**

Free respite for older adults will also be provided during each seminar session at the Austin Adult Day Health Center. Caregivers can RSVP for the free respite when they register for the seminars.

Registration for the 2017 **Caregiver Lecture Series** opens on February 15th. Admission is free, but space is limited. Register by calling (512) 600-9275, or online at www.tinyurl.com/AGEseries2017.

Follow AGE on Social Media for Daily Caregiver News, Updates & Resources:



Facebook: @AGEofCentralTX

Twitter: @AustinElderly

Memory Connections Program Expanding to Georgetown

The Memory Connections early memory loss support program will be expanding to Williamson County with the launch of a new site at the Baylor Scott & White Clinic in Georgetown, starting in March 2017.

An evidence-informed program of AGE of Central Texas, Memory Connections was created specifically to serve people experiencing early memory loss, such as mild cognitive impairment or early stage dementia. The person-centered program focuses on the strengths of the participants at their ability levels. Participants enjoy cognitive and physical activities to exercise their brains as well as a professionally-facilitated support group.

Most importantly, the free program provides a safe place where older adults experiencing early memory loss can share their challenges and emotions with others in similar situations. The program is a safe place to share a laugh, enjoy the company of others, and stimulate the brain.

Participants meet once a week from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., and the program is currently offered at four locations throughout the Central Texas area:

- Westlake Hills Presbyterian Church in West Austin
- Hope Lutheran Church in East Austin
- Bethany Lutheran Church in South Austin
- YMCA North Austin Community Recreation Center in North Austin



The Memory Connections program is designed to provide brain exercise activities, education, and emotional support to improve the participants' quality of life. Research shows that brain exercise, physical exercise, and social activities are beneficial for people with early dementia.

Although there is no cure for dementia, research shows that exercising the brain and body may help maintain memory. Memory Connections participants say that the program gives them a community of support as they face the challenges of living with early memory loss.

Each week's agenda includes a variety of activities to stimulate the brain and engage the participants. The every-changing weekly agenda includes:



- Brain booster activities, including trivia, puzzles, word games, and learning about memory;
- Current events discussion, providing opportunities for conversation and learning about world events;
- Senior fitness, such as yoga or dancing;
- Creative activities – such as creative writing, art, music therapy, improv theater – that are intended to stimulate the brain in different ways, as well as introduce participants to something new that just might become a hobby.

Members bring their lunch to enjoy eating together. A licensed professional facilitates a support group for the participants, where they can share challenges, tips, and advice related to coping with memory loss.

The program also hosts monthly caregiver support groups for family members of participants, facilitated by a licensed professional. Family caregivers have the opportunity to meet with other caregivers and to learn about important resources.

Additionally, caregivers have access to one-on-one consultation with AGE Caregiver Resource Center staff and other services, such as the Health Equipment Lending Program, Adult Day Health Center services, free CaregiverU classes, and free educational seminars.

Prospective participants must have a memory-related diagnosis from a doctor, or a demonstrated memory impairment, since program activities are informed by research about early dementia.

For more information about joining the Memory Connections program, or to volunteer with group activities, email Program Director K.C. Lawrence at klawrence@ageocentraltx.org or call (512) 451-4611, ext. 236.



AGE of Central Texas is a non-profit organization that tackles the challenges of aging with expert solutions, offering programs, resources, and education for both older adults and those who care for them. Drawn from the words of our founders, Bert Kruger Smith and Willie Kocurek, our vision is to make aging a shared journey of strength and compassion. Call (512) 451-4611 or visit online at www.AGEofCentralTX.org for more information.

Adult Day Health Care

- Providing daytime care for older adults with physical or cognitive needs in the longest-operating licensed, non-residential Day Activity and Health Service Centers in Central Texas.
- Specialized in caring for individuals with memory loss or dementia.
- Convenient locations in Austin and Round Rock, open Monday - Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
- Full-time nurse at each Center to assist with health monitoring and medication management.
- Activities designed to engage both the mind and body including music, brain boosters, gardening, and more
- All-inclusive: full day of activities, meals and snacks, and transportation options.
- Accepting Medicaid, Veteran's benefits, or private pay at \$60 per day.
- Call today for additional information and to schedule a free visit:



Austin Adult Day Health Center
3710 Cedar Street
(512) 458-6305

Round Rock Adult Day Health Center
475 Round Rock West Drive, #120
(512) 255-4865

AGE of Central Texas is an Equal Opportunity Provider

AGE of Central Texas
www.AGEofCentralTX.org

Central Office and Austin Adult Day Health Center
3710 Cedar Street, Austin, TX 78705
(512) 451-4611

Round Rock Adult Day Health Center
475 Round Rock West Drive, #120,
Round Rock, TX 78681
(512) 255-4865

Caregiver Education & Resources

- Navigation center offering free personalized assistance and guidance by phone, email, or walk-in.
- Free educational seminars and conferences with free respite services available.
- Free caregiver support group meetings every month in Austin and Round Rock.



CaregiverU

- Free evidence-based courses for non-professional, family caregivers, offered year-round at locations in Travis, Williamson, Hays, and Bastrop Counties.
- Visit www.CaregiverUcentx.org for current schedules.

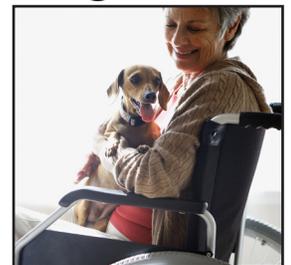
Memory Connections

- Free evidence-informed, weekly cognitive activities and support for individuals with a diagnosis of early-stage Alzheimer's disease, dementia, or memory loss.
- Five weekly locations around Central Texas with sessions from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.



Health Equipment Lending

- Free loans of gently-used durable medical equipment and free incontinence products available.
- Call (512) 600-9288 or email help@ageofcentraltx.org to request or reserve items.



Peer-Based Computer Classes

- Peer-to-peer technology instruction through low-cost classes and seminars for senior adults.
- Visit www.AGEcomputer.org for the current class schedules and more information.