

Recognizing Alzheimer Awareness Month and the Impact on Fellow Long Islanders

LIAD Center Provides Much Needed Hope & Support

With more than 50,000 people on Long Island suffering from Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia, many of us are all too familiar with the effects of cognitive impairment.

During the month of November, National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month, is a time to celebrate caregivers, especially those who are caring for loved ones and individuals with dementia such as Alzheimer's.

"Until there is a cure, the Long Island Alzheimer's & Dementia Center is a critical resource that can help families find guidance, support and hope," said Executive Director Tori Cohen, LCSW. "Our licensed social workers provide trusted referrals, including doctors who may prescribe medications to help alleviate symptoms and slow the progress of the disease. Living with Alzheimer's and other diagnosed cognitive disorders is not easy and should not be

undertaken without help from professionals."

As dementia is a disease that affects thinking and memory, it is among the most feared and most devastating. Dementia is not inevitable as we age. While "senior moments" can happen to anyone, at any age, most of those occurrences are, in fact, just moments.

"Pre-pandemic, specialized services for individuals with dementia and their caregivers were already in high demand. Now more than ever, caregivers are bearing the brunt of their loved one's disease- trying to keep them safe, healthy, active, and engaged while at home," said Director of Counseling Services and Health Operations Grace Johnson, LCSW. "This often contributes to caregiver stress, sadness, and burnout. At LIAD, we continue to care for the mental-emotional health of caregivers by providing support groups and psychotherapy. Our goal is to help caregivers navigate



challenges and avoid longer-term health or mental health problems."

Below are some signs and symptoms to watch out for that may signal the onset of dementia:

Memory loss

Forgetting new information, relying on family or friends to help 'fill in the gaps' or for reminders.

Difficulty with tasks that were once familiar

Problems cooking a meal that was once familiar, difficulty using appliances, or completing a job task.

Time and place confusion

Struggling with dates, periods of time, or understanding a clock. Also, difficulties may arise with places, such as not being able to find the restroom in a

familiar location.

Challenges with retaining new information

Difficulty reading and understanding material, visual issues when driving, unable to recall recently learned information.

Difficulty with words or written language

Trouble finding the correct word when speaking and/or mixing up words. Inability to write out a complete or coherent sentence.

Misplacing items

Putting items in unusual location, for example, placing keys in the refrigerator. Losing important items such as wedding rings, money, or medication.

Difficulty problem solving

Forgetting how to balance a checkbook, or not

understanding the meaning of the numbers they see. Difficulty with job tasks.

Poor judgement or decision making

Not understanding the value of an item and paying too little or too much. Making poor and/or dangerous driving decisions. Inability to comprehend risks.

Withdrawal

Moving away from social circles or friends. Refusing to join in or attend activities once familiar and fun.

Mood or personality changes

Irritation or depression are common symptoms. Forgetting or not understanding the cause of irritation. Additionally, unexplained anger, lack of, or too much sleep.

If you are concerned for yourself or a loved one, it is important to seek medical help. Any person who experiences these symptoms should visit a doctor to rule out other underlying medical

causes.

Sources: <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/324516.php>; Alzinfo.org;

Due to the current pandemic, LIAD Center has transitioned all of their services to be held virtually, however they are hopeful about reopening their center in the near future. They partnered with many organizations over the past few months to reach as many people in need as possible during these trying times. *Pictured below is one of their clients that was surprised at his home with a gift to cheer him up from his family at the LIAD Center.*

