

Everything You
Need to Know
for Your
Memory Support Journey



Everything You Need to Know *for Your* Memory Support Journey

A caregiver, like you, may not always be aware that they are, in fact, a caregiver, especially if they are unsure whether they're on a memory support journey with their loved one. Educating yourself on memory impairment and finding a continuing care community that provides memory support and assisted living to fit the needs of your loved one can greatly help.

To find a perfect community for your loved one, you want to be as educated as possible on all things memory since you are the primary bond and point of contact. You'll need to know what memory impairment looks like, what steps you need to take to care for your loved one, and what resources are available for you to feel most equipped to help when you can.



Age-related Decline *or* Memory Impairment

You've reached a point where you can't quite tell if the changing behaviors you're seeing in your loved one are normal for their age or part of something more serious.

Here are signs of purely age-related memory decline:

- Their memory problems hardly affect their daily life or ability to complete their usual tasks
- They have little difficulty learning or remembering new things
- They don't have an underlying medical condition that would set off any memory problems
- They occasionally struggle to find the right word or forget details from something a year ago, the name of an acquaintance, or other miscellaneous information
- They lose something, forget the date, or miss a payment once in a while
- They can recall their instances of forgetfulness
- They get more distracted and have difficulty multitasking

Here are signs of a more serious memory impairment like Alzheimer's or dementia:

- Their memory loss is noticeably affecting their daily life and ability to complete usual tasks and routines
- They constantly ask the same questions and get lost in places they should be familiar with
- They struggle to learn or retain new information like the names of known family members or recent details from conversations and events
- They experience frequent pausing and difficulty finding the words they want to use
- They lose sense of time and struggle to take care of themselves with hygiene, eating good meals, paying bills, and losing items
- They can't recall their instances of forgetfulness and make frequent bad decisions
- There are changes in their mood, personality, problem-solving skills, and level of work and social activities or engagements

Some people can also experience mild cognitive impairment (MCI), causing them to encounter more memory-related issues than other people their age while still being able to take care of themselves.





Getting *a* Diagnosis

If your loved one is showing signs of memory impairment, it's time to initiate the process of obtaining an official diagnosis. Before speaking to a doctor, have a conversation with your loved one about the behavior that concerns you and encourage them to see a health care provider. You can organize a family gathering where everyone can sit down to discuss the future together and how you want the best for them. A formal diagnosis allows them to start treatments, sort out financial or legal matters, and choose future care preferences and housing options.

In order to reach a diagnosis, your general practitioner will conduct a physical exam, blood tests, brain scans, EEGs, and mental assessments. Some questions like these may be asked:

- When did the memory problems start?
- What medications and supplements do you take, and did you just start taking something?
- Have you recently been injured or sick?
- Are you depressed or anxious in general or about anything in particular that's happened recently?
- What tasks have become difficult to complete?
- How do you cope with your memory loss?

Afterward, you might be sent to a specialist, like a psychologist, neurologist, or psychiatrist, to conclude the diagnosis.



Caregiver Checklist

Your loved one has received a diagnosis of memory impairment – now what? As their caregiver, you'll want to go through this checklist to ensure everyone's right on track for the best care:

- Accept the diagnosis, learn more about the memory impairment your family is living with, and make sure other family, friends, coworkers, neighbors, and so on are aware of the situation
- Organize medical and other appointments
- Ensure legal matters like a power of attorney, will, living trust, living will, advance healthcare directive, and record of future wishes are prepared and current
- Create alternative plans if you are unable to provide care
- Explore assistive living and memory support options
- Apply for treatments and financial support
- Gather financial information like insurance policies, Social Security, tax records, accounts, usernames and passwords, bills, and household debt

And as the caregiver, you also deserve the best help out there. You can access insights, tips, and tools for helping you navigate your continuing care options [here](#).





Next Step

Now that you've started the conversation, you will need to develop a plan of action to follow through with the decisions made. You can also learn more about assisted living [here](#).

Research Local Options and Arrange a Tour

The next natural step in the process is to start looking at your local options. Visit websites, request information, and look at floor plans. When you tour, take your [checklist](#) with you so you can review together afterward. You can schedule a tour for the LEC campus that interests you [here](#).

Counseling can be very helpful when making big decisions. Whether it's a trusted counselor or clergy, having someone willing to help support you mentally, emotionally, and spiritually is good practice.

Now that you've learned what you need to know about getting your loved one help, it's time to contact a professional.

Ready for the Next Step?

Check out our other resources at lec.org/resources to help you and your family age well.





Life Enriching Communities owns and operates six senior living communities (CCRCs)...

CINCINNATI AREA

- Twin Towers, College Hill: **513-853-2000**
- Twin Lakes, Montgomery: **513-247-1300**
- Confident Living, Tri-State Area: **513-719-3522**

CLEVELAND AREA

- Concord Reserve, Westlake: **440-961-3700**

COLUMBUS AREA

- Wesley Glen, Clintonville: **614-888-7492**
- Wesley Ridge, Reynoldsburg: **614-759-0023**
- Wesley Woods, New Albany: **614-656-4100**
- Wesley Hospice, Central Ohio: **614-451-6700**

**For additional resources,
visit us online at:
www.lec.org**



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