

# DEMENTIA: SO MUCH MORE THAN MEMORY LOSS

BUFFALO AND PEPIN  
COUNTIES I-TEAM

# OVERVIEW

- Quick Review
- What Do the Senses Have to do with Dementia?
- Using OUR Senses to Communicate
- Program Updates



# QUICK REVIEW: A FEW NEW FACTS

---

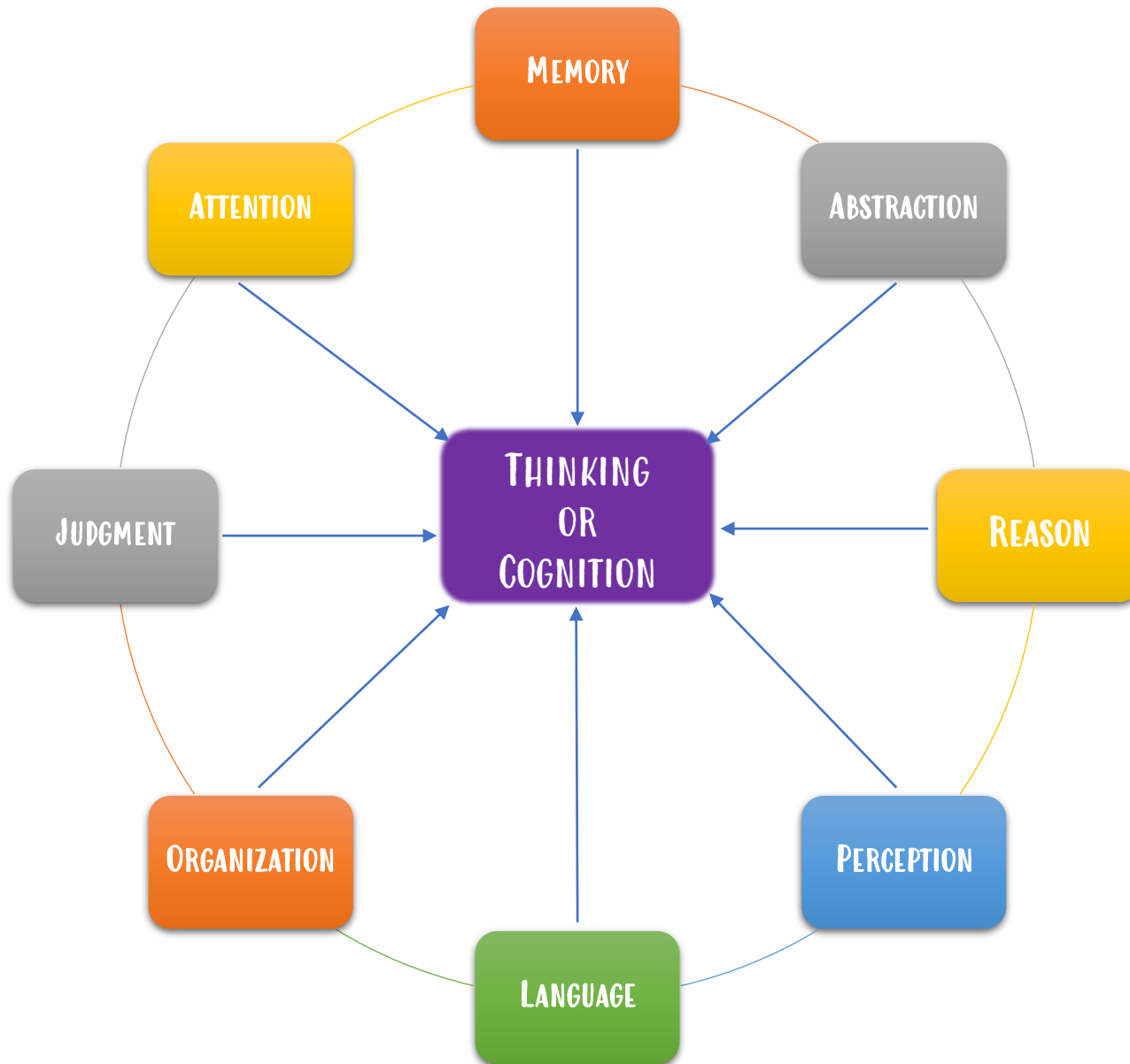
1. More than 6 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's disease or related dementia.
2. Alzheimer's may be responsible for more than 500,000 annual deaths in the U.S.
3. Incidents of alcohol related dementia is rising.
4. Statistics about Alzheimer's note that lack of sleep may cause a threefold risk of developing the disease.
5. People living with dementia are twice as likely to get COVID and four times likely to die from COVID.
6. New medication approved by the FDA - Aduhelm (aducanumab)
7. Discrimination is a barrier to Alzheimer's and dementia care. Certain populations reported discrimination when seeking health care.
  - 50% Black, 42% Native, 34% Asian, 33% Hispanic Americans

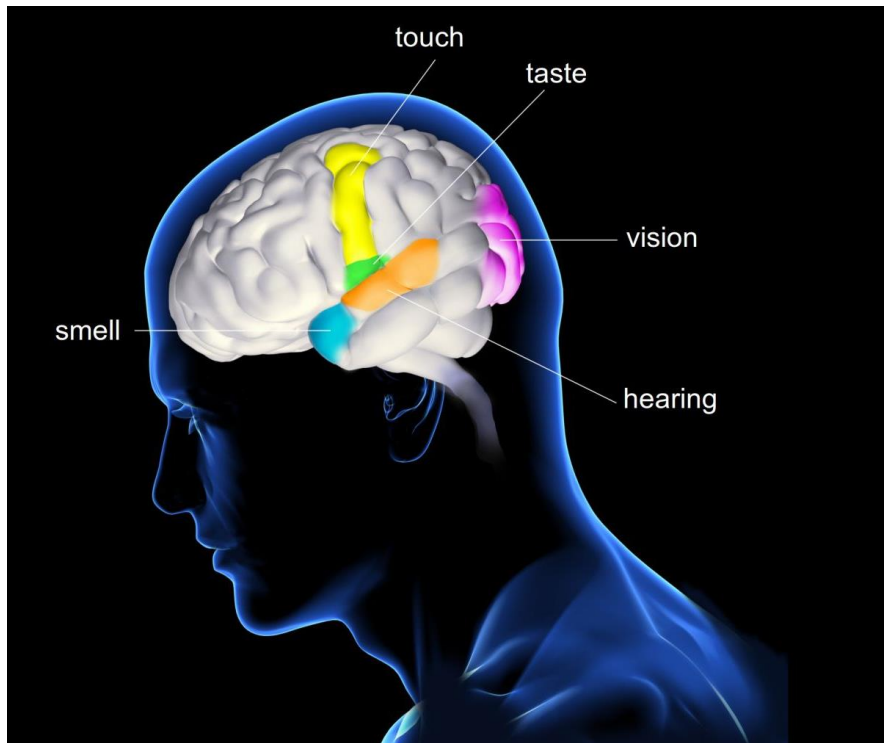
# QUICK REVIEW: WHAT IS DEMENTIA AGAIN?

---

- Dementia is a condition of global deterioration of memory and cognition that impairs thought (memory, abstraction, reason, perception, language, organization, judgment, attention)
- Dementia illnesses interfere with social functioning
- Produced by a number of diseases: AD, LBD, Vascular, FTD, Mixed
- Progressive
- Typically not reversible; ultimately terminal
- No prevention, cure, or ways to slow
- Best way to reduce your risk...live an active and healthy life

# QUICK REVIEW: ELEMENTS OF COGNITION





WHAT DO THE  
SENSES HAVE  
TO DO WITH  
DEMENTIA?





**VISION...DEPTH PERCEPTION**

# VISION...MISPERCEPTION





# VISION...MISIDENTIFICATION

---



# VISION...SAFETY IN THE HOME



Hairspray?



Bubble Bath?



Mouthwash?



Bodywash?



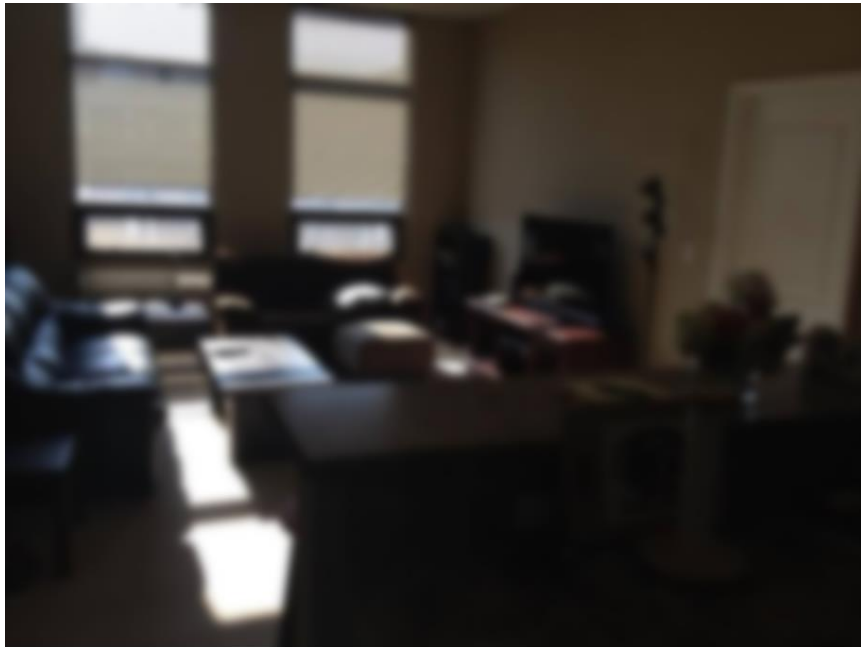
Toothpaste?



Which med?

# VISION...SAFETY IN THE HOME

---



# HEARING

- Due to changes in the temporal lobe, it makes it difficult to process certain sounds and interpret what is heard
- Words and sounds can come across as garbles, distorted, or meaningless
- Hypersensitivity to noise and certain tones
- Sensitivity to noisy environments, difficulty filtering out sounds
- Information overload





# SMELL, TASTE AND TOUCH

- Damage to the parietal lobe can lead to the inability to smell, taste, and touch
- One of the most dangerous sensory changes – loss of smell
- Sensitivity to taste declines
- The brain is no longer able to interpret heat/cold, discomfort or distinguish pain, difficulty with fine motor skills
- Touch can become painful





# **LIVING WITH SENSORY CHANGES**

# NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF YOUR...

- Facial expression
- Tone of voice
- Body language

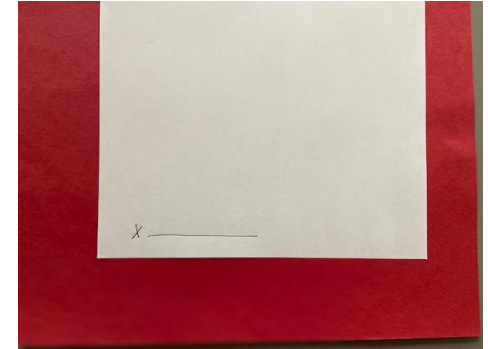




# USING OUR SENSES TO COMMUNICATE

---

- Consider color/contrast
- Use adaptive equipment
- Use visual cues – point
- Look directly at the person when speaking
- Use reference points when describing where something is
- If you are helping the person with a task, let them know what you are going to do before and during it
- Position yourself at their level
- Be sure to have their attention
- Smile (with your mask your eyebrows should be showing them your smile)





# USING OUR SENSES TO COMMUNICATE

---



## Over the phone:

- Request they have a pen and paper for note taking
- Ask one question at a time
- Provide one step directions
- Speak slowly and clearly
- Repeat your instructions back, slowly
- Ask them to repeat back their understanding and/or next steps
- “Tell me more about it”
- Provide visual follow up: send communication via mail with letter reminder of the verbal exchange

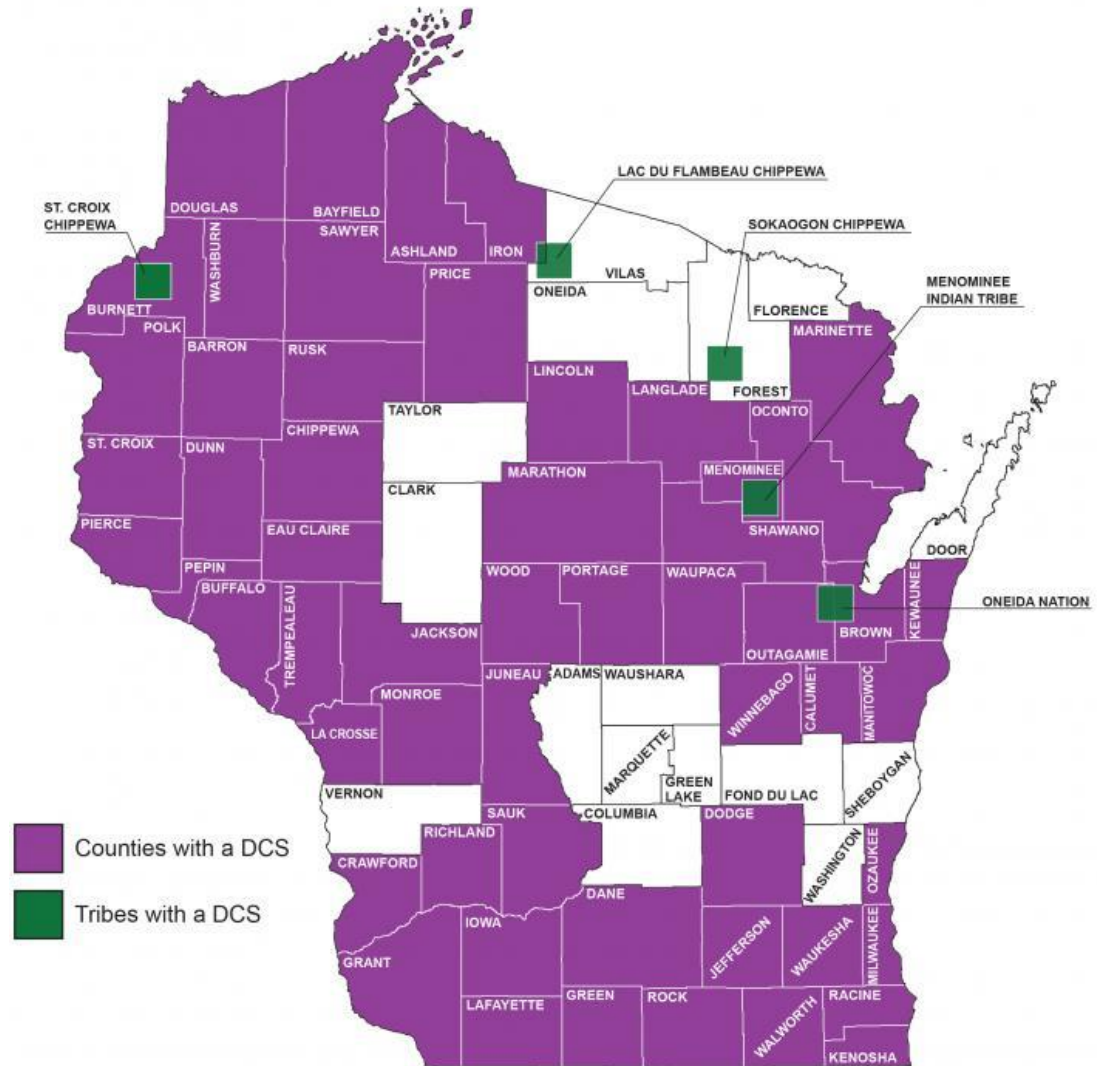
## In-Person:

- Same techniques as over the phone
- Patiently wait for a response
- Focus on feelings, not facts
- Limit distractions
- Don’t use slang or figures of speech
- Rephrase your question
- Affirm and compliment
- Share a touch

# PROGRAM UPDATES

- Dementia Care Specialist 2022 expansion
- On the horizon:
  - Badge for Students Program
  - Advocacy for Self and Others
  - WIHA – new publications
  - Work w/Tribal nations

## Aging and Disability Resource Center and Tribal Dementia Care Specialists (DCS)



# Any Questions??

## Katrina Longmire, CSW

*(she/her/hers)*

Dementia Care Specialist  
ADRC of Buffalo and Pepin Counties  
740 Seventh Ave W.  
P.O. Box 39  
Durand, WI 54736

Phone: 715.279.7870

Email: [klongmire@co.pepin.wi.us](mailto:klongmire@co.pepin.wi.us)

Email: [Katrina.Longmire@buffalocountywi.gov](mailto:Katrina.Longmire@buffalocountywi.gov)