This program was adapted from Dementia Friends, an initiative of the Alzheimer’s Society. The Society works to improve the quality of life of people affected by dementia in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. To learn more visit: https://www.dementiafriends.org.uk/
Alzheimer’s Disease Facts and Figures

- 89,000 Minnesotans age 65+ live with Alzheimer's disease and the number is growing.

- One in nine people age 65 and older has Alzheimer's disease.

- About one-third of people age 85 and older have Alzheimer's disease.

- Because of the increasing number of people age 65 and older in the United States, particularly the oldest-old, the annual number of new cases of Alzheimer’s and other dementias is projected to double by 2050.

- Younger onset Alzheimer’s, occurring in people under age 65, is on the rise.

- Older African-Americans and Hispanics are proportionately more likely than older whites to have Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. This is related to an increased risk of diabetes and heart disease which are known risk factors for Alzheimer’s disease.

- Many individuals with Alzheimer’s live alone and are at greater risk for inadequate self-care, malnutrition, untreated medical conditions, falls, wandering and accidental deaths.

- 60-70% of older adults with Alzheimer’s disease live in the community.

- Nearly 250,000 Minnesotans care for family members with Alzheimer’s disease.

Reference: Alzheimer’s Association Facts and Figures
http://www.alz.org/alzheimers_disease_facts_and_figures.asp
What is a Dementia Friend?

- A Dementia Friend learns a bit about dementia and how to communicate and support someone with dementia.

- They then turn that understanding into action.

- Dementia Friends is part of a growing network of people creating dementia-friendly communities together in your neighborhood, community or workplace.

- Anyone of any age can be a Dementia Friend.
Creating an informed, safe and respectful community for people with dementia includes:

- Raising awareness about Alzheimer's, transforming attitudes, and moving people to action
- Having supportive options that foster quality of life for persons touched by the disease and their caregivers and families
- Engaging and including people from diverse communities*
- Creating and promoting community life that welcomes and involves everyone

*Alzheimer’s disease touches every community, yet some people, such as African Americans and Latinos, are at greater risk of developing the disease. Being inclusive and culturally sensitive in fostering dementia-friendly support will impact the health and well-being of the whole community, as well as people living with dementia.

Reference: ACT on Alzheimer’s
http://www.actonalz.org/
Dementia (or Neurocognitive Disorder/NCD) is the broad or general term for all forms of dementia. There are MANY types of dementia. The most common type is Alzheimer’s disease. Less common types of dementia include Vascular, Lewy Body, and Frontotemporal. Dementia is caused by physical changes in the brain.
### Normal Aging vs. Dementia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Normal Aging</th>
<th>10 Warning Signs of Dementia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes forgetting names or appointments but remembering later</td>
<td>Memory loss that disrupts daily life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making occasional errors when balancing a checkbook</td>
<td>Challenges in planning or solving problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasional help to use the settings on a microwave or to record a TV show</td>
<td>Difficulty completing familiar tasks at home, at work or at leisure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confused about the day of the week but recalling later</td>
<td>Confusion with time or place.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vision changes (cataracts)</td>
<td>Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes having trouble finding the right word</td>
<td>New problems with words in speaking or writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misplacing things from time to time and retracing steps to find them</td>
<td>Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making a bad decision once in a while</td>
<td>Decreased or poor judgment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes feeling weary of work, family and social obligations</td>
<td>Withdrawal from work or social activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Becoming irritable when a routine is disrupted</td>
<td>Changes in mood and personality.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reference:**
10 Early Signs of Alzheimer’s Disease
http://www.alz.org/alzheimers_disease_10_signs_of_alzheimers.asp
Five Key Messages About Dementia

1. Dementia is not a normal part of aging.

2. Dementia is caused by diseases of the brain.

3. It's not just about losing your memory.

4. It's possible to have a good quality of life with dementia.

5. There's more to a person than the dementia.
**Broken Sentences Worksheet**

Match the sentences in Column 1 to Column 2 by drawing a line from each sentence start to the corresponding sentence end. You should have eight sentences that make sense.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column 1</th>
<th>Column 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Alzheimer’s disease is the most common ...</td>
<td>a) ... the symptoms will gradually get worse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Alzheimer’s disease usually starts by ...</td>
<td>b) ... form of dementia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Dementia is not ...</td>
<td>c) ... a normal part of aging.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Dementia is caused by ...</td>
<td>d) ... well with dementia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Dementia affects ...</td>
<td>e) ... the dementia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Dementia is progressive ...</td>
<td>f) ... affecting people’s short term memory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. It is possible to live ...</td>
<td>g) ... a disease of the brain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. There’s more to the person than ...</td>
<td>h) ... each person in different ways.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following analogy is a good way to illustrate how dementia might affect a person.

Imagine a 70-year-old woman who has dementia. Imagine there is a full bookcase beside her, as tall as her, and each book represents one of her skills or memories. On the top shelf are the most recent memories. Memories of her 60s are by her shoulders, those of her 20s by her knees and her childhood at her feet.

Dementia rocks her bookcase and her books start to fall off, starting with the top shelf first. When her top shelves are empty she might find herself living in the past, lower down her bookcase. If she finds herself living in the 1950’s, she may not know the name of the President or the day of the week. She might be confused about why her home looks different, or why she has an electric kettle rather than a whistle kettle. Once you understand that this is her reality, you can better support her.

The bookcase analogy helps to explain that there are different types of memory. Factual memories are books that will fall quickly. Emotional memories, on the other hand, remain in the memory longer.

With the example of our 70-year-old woman, her daughter may visit to find that her mother can no longer remember her name. She will, however, remember her feelings from that visit, feelings of love, comfort and support. Equally, if the mother and daughter were to argue, the mother might not remember the details of the argument, but she will remember the feelings of anger and hurt from the exchange.
Image of a healthy brain and a brain with advanced Alzheimer’s

Reference:
Inside the Brain: An Interactive Tour
http://www.alz.org/alzheimers_disease_4719.asp
Everyday Tasks

Write a step-by-step list to complete a task you do daily or often; e.g., brush teeth, make a sandwich, buy eggs.

Write the instructions so that someone could follow them successfully to complete the task.
**Communication and Dementia**

- **Identify yourself.** Approach the person from the front and say who you are. Keep good eye contact; if the person is seated or reclined, go down to that level.

- **Call the person by their preferred name.** It helps orient the person and gets his or her attention.

- **Use short, simple phrases.** Lengthy requests or stories can be overwhelming. Ask one question at a time. Repeating the same phrase can also help.

- **Speak slowly and clearly.** Be aware of speed and clarity. Use a gentle and relaxed tone — a lower pitch is more calming.

- **Patiently wait for a response.** The person may need extra time to process what you said.

- **Repeat information or questions as needed.** If the person doesn't respond, wait a moment. Then ask again. Watch for non-verbal cues.

- **Turn questions into answers.** Provide the solution rather than the question. For example, say "The bathroom is right here," instead of asking, "Do you need to use the bathroom?"

- **Avoid confusing and vague statements.** If you tell the person to "Hop in!" he or she may interpret your instructions literally. Instead, describe the action directly: "Please come here. Your shower is ready." Instead of using "it" or "that," name the object or place. For example rather than "Here it is" say "Here is your hat."

- **Turn negatives into positives.** Instead of saying, "Don't go there," say, "Let's go here. Don’t argue.

- **Give visual cues.** To help demonstrate the task, point or touch the item you want the person to use or begin the task for him or her.
• **Avoid quizzing.** Reminiscing may be healthy, but avoid asking, "Do you remember when?"

• **Write things down.** Try using written notes as reminders if the person is able to understand them.

• **Treat the person with dignity and respect.** Avoid talking down to the person or talking as if he or she isn't there.

• **Convey an easygoing manner.** Be aware of your feelings and attitude — you may be communicating through your tone of voice. Use positive, friendly facial expressions and nonverbal communication. Your goal is to support, comfort and reassure.
Be Aware of How You Communicate

- Be aware of your feelings and attitude.
- Be patient and supportive.
- Offer comfort and reassurance.
- Avoid criticizing or correcting.
- Avoid arguing.
- Offer a guess.
- Encourage unspoken communication.

Turn Your Understanding into ACTion!

I’m a Dementia Friend.
As a Dementia Friend, I will:

Resources in Your Community

- Alzheimer’s Association Minnesota North Dakota 24/7 Helpline (800.272.3900) which serves people with memory loss, caregivers, health care professionals, the general public, diverse populations, concerned friends and family. The Helpline offers referrals to local community programs and services, dementia-related education, crisis assistance and emotional support. Visit: http://alz.org/mnnd/

- Senior LinkAge Line® which provides you with information, assistance and can connect you with resources in your community. Call 1-800-333-2433 or visit: www.MinnesotaHelp.info *

Thank you for becoming a Dementia Friend!
I’m a Dementia Friend.

As a Dementia Friend, I will: