

# Discussing Dementia 2: On Caring @ St. Peter's Tamworth – Summary 2

4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> May 2018

## **B. “Discussing Dementia 1: An Overview” - Recap**

**B.1** Dementia is NOT a part of normal ageing.

**B.2** What is dementia?

DE – MENT-IA. A DE-cline of the brain (MENTal). It is a form of **brain damage**. Dementia is an incurable and life-limiting illness. It is not contagious. People are not ‘senile’, ‘dotty’, ‘ga-ga’, ‘not there’, etc. Dementia is not a mental illness.

The three main symptoms of dementia are:

1. Cognitive changes: memory, thinking, decision-making, confusion, staring.
2. Functional changes: walking, talking, swallowing, continence.
3. Mood changes: (over-stimulation), anxiety, aggression, “sundowning”, depression.

**B.3** How common is dementia? Dementia Australia 28.2.2018:

425,000 Australians living with dementia. 250 more people each day.

By **2025**: 536,000 people. By **2050**: 1.1 million people .

<sup>nd</sup> 2 leading cause of death in Australia. Leading cause of death for women!  
The prevalence of dementia doubles every 5 five years between 70-84.

**B.4** Types of dementia:

Dementia is an **umbrella** term. It is used to describe a collection of symptoms caused by disorders affecting the brain. More than 100 different disorders.

**i. Alzheimer's disease.** 50-70%.

**ii. Vascular dementia.** ~20%.

**iii. Dementia with Lewy Bodies.** ~15%.

**iv. Fronto temporal / Frontal-lobe dementia.** ~5%.

**v. Other types:** e.g. Parkinson's dementia, Huntington's dementia, Alcoholic dementia (Korsakoff's syndrome), drug-induced dementias e.g. Ice.

It is a Myth that you will get dementia if your parents had it. A diagnosis of dementia after age 65 is only slightly influenced by genetics. Dementia is 60% more likely to be caused by obesity and 80% more likely to be caused by being inactive.

**B.5** Stages of dementia:

**Mild Cognitive Impairment**; Three stages of dementia: mild, moderate, severe.

**University of Tasmania**: Two **MOOCs** (MOOC = Massive Open Online Course)

“Understanding Dementia”, “Preventing Dementia”: <https://mooc.utas.edu.au/courses>

UTAS **stages** of dementia focus on the word “**dignity**”:

**i. Dignity with autonomy** lead my own life, make my own decisions.

**ii. Dignity with safety**: Safety for the person and for others, usually in full-time care.

**iii. Dignity with Comfort**: Full-time nursing care (including palliative care).

- B.6** Memory:  
Layers of an onion; My Memory/OUR memory; Writing it down; Memory triggers;  
Children's book: "Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge".
- B.7** Music:  
"*Music has charms to soothe a savage breast, to soften rocks, or bend a knotted oak*" cf. "breastbone". Book: **Music Remembers Me** by Kirsty Beilharz. Use iPods and headphones. Words matter. Watch the "Gladys Wilson and Naomi Feil" video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CrZXz10FcVM>.
- B.8** "spirit talks to spirit" – See **G. Where is God in dementia?**