

Observing Alzheimer's and Dementia Staff Education Week

By Pam Meyer

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February 14-21, 2021 is Alzheimer's and Dementia Staff Education Week. Every year, the National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners (NCCDP) dedicates a week in February to raise awareness about Alzheimer's and dementia while educating staff on the best practices while caring for patients with these conditions.

For the last 15 years, NCCDP has strived to bring international awareness to the importance of dementia education through Alzheimer's and Dementia Staff Education Week. Dementia is the general term for memory loss and other cognitive abilities that interfere with a person's quality of life.

Dementia covers a wide range of specific conditions including Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, and more. These disorders, caused by abnormal brain changes, trigger a decline in cognitive abilities and often severely impact daily life.

Although dementia is seen more frequently in older adults, it is not considered a normal part of aging. Some identified causes of dementia may include progressive brain cell death, head injury, stroke, brain tumor, and others.

According to recent studies, there are an estimated 47.5 million people suffering from dementia worldwide and a new case is diagnosed every four seconds.

According to the Alzheimer's Association, some signs and symptoms that could indicate the onset of dementia or Alzheimer's may include:

1. Memory loss that disrupts daily life
2. Challenges in planning or solving problems

3. Difficulty completing familiar tasks
4. Confusion with time or place
5. Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships
6. New problems with words in speaking or writing
7. Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps
8. Decreased or poor judgment
9. Withdrawal from work or social activities
10. Changes in mood and personality

One of the goals of Alzheimer's and Dementia Staff Education Week is to help coordinate and promote staff training when caring for patients with these conditions.

Our therapy staff at BLC-Wahpeton have been trained in Dementia Capable Care and we thank them for contributing their skills and knowledge to enhancing the quality of life for our residents and their families.

Pam Meyer is Wellness Director for BLC-Wahpeton.