

OUR VOICES



Brain Health Wisdom for Indigenous People

Ukwaw^{na}?shuha

December 2023/ No. 5

Shekoli! (Hello)

Welcome to our newsletter, "Our Voices." This quarterly publication is designed to inform you of future events, brain health resources, celebrations, and other helpful news.

I want to connect with our community and welcome any suggestions or comments. Please get in touch with me.

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Cars and Guitars Rolls in the Classics for Alzheimer's Open House



As the classic cars rolled in, community members listened to the sweet oldies of Oneida's Rock n Daddys band at the Oneida and Wisconsin Alzheimer's Disease Research Center (ADRC) Open House in September.

Nearly 130 community members attended Oneida and ADRC's day of fun, food, and information booths to learn more about Alzheimer's disease and the available resources.

Attendees enjoyed picnic food, raffles, and a kid's table. They relished the live music and were thrilled by the burnouts of REZurrected Ridez and Savage Rides classic cars!

Resource tables from Oneida's Native American Family Caregiver Program, Fox Valley Memory Project, Dementia Care Specialist, Stroke Prevention, Oneida Language Nest, Native American Center for Health Professions, and Brown County Community Friendly Coalition served to provide information about their respective programs and organizations.

Our Voices Purpose

- Provide support and information
- Help with motivation
- Highlight accomplishments
- Announcements and updates

Oneida ADRC Outreach Celebrates Open House!



Photos by Dennis King



Understanding Veteran's experiencing Alzheimer's Disease

By Luciana Mitzkun, Alzheimer's Association of California

Dementia takes the veteran on an emotional journey that can be compared to time traveling. As memories fade, veterans travel emotionally back in time, often reliving past events as if they were current. Past accomplishments and sorrows, long-resolved relationships, jobs, responsibilities, traumas, victories, and defeats elicit renewed importance in their mind.

As the emotional clock ticks backwards to earlier years, veterans living with dementia may find themselves reliving their service years. Many feel trapped in a state of war from which they cannot emerge. Time has been turned back and they are now stuck in their worst days. They can relive the traumas and feelings of anxiety, suspicion, fear, loneliness, and the need for he alertness for self-protection and the urge to fight back. All those issues that may have resulted in post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), return to stay, and the veteran inhabits that space and is unable to shake off those experiences.

People with dementia cannot control these emotions. PTSD-therapy does not work because dementia has robbed them of the very cognitive abilities necessary to process it. Many times, these emotions manifest in acts of self-isolation,



resistance to care, agitation, and suspiciousness.

Depending on the severity of the stress experienced during their service, veterans may now suffer from strong behavioral and psychological symptoms of dementia (BPSD). It is a hard place to be stuck, both for the veteran and for their loved one.

Families of veterans with dementia must learn to understand the uniqueness of their experience and work closely with doctors and professional caregivers to alleviate these symptoms.

Medications can take the edge off of the most severe symptoms, but must be administered with extreme caution and under the strict supervision of a qualified medical specialist. Other helpful interventions include social activities in nurturing settings and the adoption of a daily routine, both of which can bring a sense of safety, acceptance, and

belonging to the person. Promoting positive feelings helps to demote negative ones.

Attending day programs that offer structured activities can be beneficial to vets who rely on stable social settings that provide for their need to feel safe. There are support groups that use acceptance and humor to help veterans counteract possible underlying negative feelings. Making new friends and finding camaraderie while benefiting from reassuring supervision can greatly increase their ability to suppress PTSD-related symptoms.

The needs of veterans living with dementia are unique. Use every resource available to remind them that they are currently in a safe place, and that they are loved and appreciated.



Remember to join the Oneida Veterans on Saturday, November 11 at the Oneida VFW building as they serve the community booyah at 11am.

ICARE researchers review impacts of work with Indigenous Communities

Researchers from four Indigenous Nations came together to report ICARE highlights of the past year and how their research impacted the communities of the tribal nations surrounding the Great Lakes region including the Red Lake Nation, MN, Grand Portage Band of Chippewa, MN, Oneida Nation, WI, and First Nations in Manitoulin Island Ontario.



Their welcoming day included an Edge of the Woods Ceremony (below right), indoor activities including seed and plant identification as well as a tour of the aquaponics program in Oneida (below left).

A big picture meeting recapped highlights of the past year. Community Researchers Marlene Summers and Lois Metoxen Strong (above left) described their role within research and how it evolved over the years. They described the impacts of the research in our community as well as strengths, challenges, and opportunities for growth.



Background Info: The ICARE research (Indigenous Cultural Understandings of Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementias Research and Engagement) project explores dementia experiences of four diverse Indigenous populations in Canada and the United States. Scientific research indicates Indigenous populations experience higher rates of this disease as well as an earlier onset. This project takes a community-based approach using a Two-Eyed Seeing framework which uses both Indigenous and Western ways of knowing. It works to build trusting relationships and investigates the impact of the disease to improve the lives of Indigenous people, families, and communities.

Signs and Symptoms of Alzheimer's disease

by the National Institutes of Health (NIH)

Memory problems are typically one of the first signs of cognitive impairment related to Alzheimer's. Some people with memory problems have a condition called **mild cognitive impairment (MCI)**. With MCI, people have more memory problems than normal for their age, but their symptoms do not interfere with their everyday lives.

Movement difficulties and problems with the **sense of smell** have also been linked to MCI. Older people with MCI are at greater risk for developing Alzheimer's, but not all of them do so. Some may even revert to normal cognition.

The first symptoms of Alzheimer's vary from person to person. For many, decline in nonmemory aspects of cognition, such as word finding, vision/spatial issues, and impaired reasoning or judgment may signal the very early stages of the disease.

Researchers are studying **biomarkers** (biological signs of disease found in brain images, cerebrospinal fluid, and blood) to detect early changes in the brains of people with MCI and in cognitively normal people who may be at greater risk for Alzheimer's.

More research is needed before these techniques can be used broadly and routinely to diagnose Alzheimer's in a health care provider's office.

Seasonal Changes, Going Indoors, and Watching Your Health

Your physical and mental health is important to us. Physical ailments, sadness, and immobility can plague our mental outlook.

We want you to know we care about

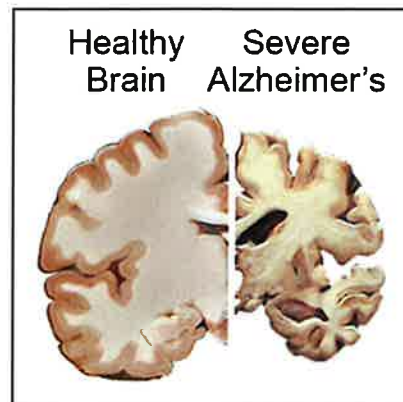


you and want you to stay active in many ways!

Please watch for your annual care boxes in the mail this winter.

Sk^n^
(Peace and Wellness)

How does Alzheimer's disease affect the brain?



Scientists continue to unravel the complex brain changes involved in Alzheimer's. Changes in the brain may begin a decade or more before symptoms appear.

During this very early stage of Alzheimer's, toxic changes are taking place in the brain, including abnormal buildups of proteins that form amyloid plaques and tau tangles.

Previously healthy neurons stop functioning, lose connections with other neurons, and die. Many other complex brain changes are thought to play a role in Alzheimer's as well.

The damage initially appears to take place in the hippocampus and the entorhinal cortex, which are parts of the brain that are essential in forming memories.

As more neurons die, additional parts of the brain are affected and begin to shrink. By the final stage of Alzheimer's, damage is widespread and brain tissue has shrunk significantly.

-from National Institute on Aging (NIA)

New Season

S	N	P	S	W	I	S	H	P	I	E	D	K	K
G	S	L	H	L	N	R	S	U	L	E	E	I	H
N	T	P	R	L	D	E	E	Z	E	R	E	E	Y
I	A	S	C	U	O	Y	V	Z	V	T	S	R	D
K	E	E	L	T	O	A	O	L	S	E	I	A	R
L	H	H	I	E	R	L	L	E	D	L	C	S	A
A	G	H	S	I	S	W	G	S	Y	P	R	S	T
W	N	P	U	O	S	A	E	I	S	A	E	A	E
H	I	Z	L	S	D	A	O	A	E	M	X	E	Z
S	D	A	P	S	T	E	W	C	V	E	E	E	S
O	A	D	E	Z	T	I	A	O	A	Z	E	T	E
E	E	A	E	K	I	G	E	R	E	S	A	P	T
T	R	T	S	D	N	I	W	N	L	O	S	S	G
I	S	R	E	O	E	O	Z	S	C	D	S	P	I

GLOVES
 STEW
 READING
 COATS
 WALKING
 SOUP
 EXERCISE
 PUZZLES
 LEAVES
 INDOORS
 ACORNS
 MAPLE TREE
 WINDS
 HEAT
 HYDRATE
 LAYERS

Taking a quick exercise break? Try one of these ideas!





Endurance

Endurance exercises improve the health of your heart, lungs, and circulatory system.



Flexibility

Stretching can improve your flexibility to make everyday activities easier.



Balance

Balance exercises help prevent falls and can improve balance.



Strength

Strength exercises can help you stay independent and prevent fall-related injuries.

➔ To learn more about exercise, visit: www.nia.nih.gov/exercise.