

DEMENTIA



What is dementia?

Dementia isn't a specific disease but a general term for a decline in mental and physical functions. The most common type of dementia is Alzheimer's Disease. While dementia is more common in older adults, it is *not* a typical part of aging.

What are some signs of dementia?

The signs of dementia can be different for everyone, but commonly include:

- not knowing where you are
- having a hard time doing something familiar like driving to the grocery store
- exercising poor judgment
- forgetting where you put things
- quick mood changes

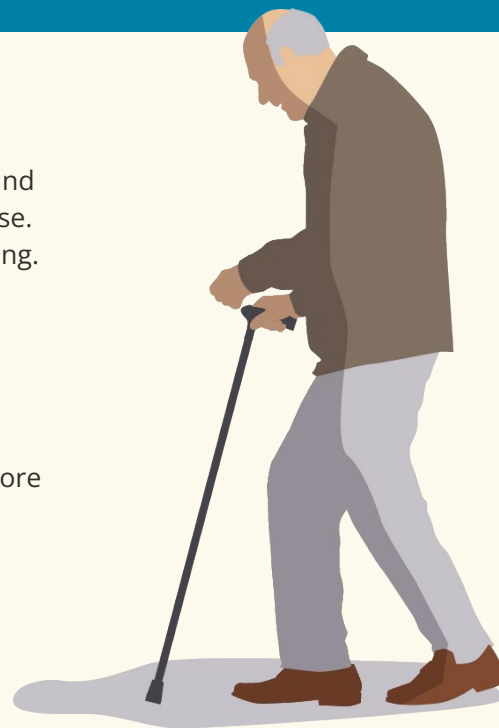
If an older adult has dementia, does that mean they need a guardian?

Not necessarily. Guardianship is appropriate if a person cannot meet their own needs, they are at risk of harm because of this, and they don't understand their limitations are putting them at risk. Guardianship must be used as a last resort when less restrictive alternatives have already been explored. Mental capacity isn't an on and off switch – a person's level of capacity can change over their lifetime and even over the course of a single day. A person with dementia may still have the capacity to meet their own needs and simply not want to accept help.

What are some options to help a person with dementia aside from guardianship?

These tools may be helpful:

- **Power of Attorney** is a document where one person, the principal, appoints someone else, the agent, to manage their money and property.
- **Health Care Proxy** is a document where one person selects someone else to make health care decisions on their behalf if they become unable to make those decisions for themselves.
- Case Management is collaborative process with trained professionals to develop a plan of services enabling a person to live independently in the community. Contact your [local office for the aging](#) or search for case management services on [NY Connects](#).



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I'm concerned about someone with dementia. Where can I find help and more information?

- [Alzheimer's Association](#) has a 24 hour helpline offering support, information, and resources for people living with dementia, caregivers, families, and the public. The service is free, confidential, and available to everyone. Call (800) 272-3900 or [use the Alzheimer's Associations' online form](#).
- [CaringKind](#) (NYC only) has a helpline staffed by Dementia Specialists who provide in-depth, personalized consultations for individuals and families facing decisions and challenges associated with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias. Call (646) 744-2900, email helpline@cknyc.org, or [use CaringKind's online form](#).
- [Learn more about the differences between dementia and Alzheimer's Disease](#).
- [Learn how dementia is diagnosed](#).