Cognitive Care Plan

BrainCheck

Prepared by	Practice	Patient	Care Partner
Test Provider, NP	Test Practice [TEST]	Test Patient	Test Care Partner

Diagnosis

Moderate Dementia

Your loved one has difficulty participating in memory testing and needs help with some basic activities such as [dressing, bathing, and toileting]. The combination of difficulty participating in memory testing because of severe cognitive impairment and needing help with basic daily tasks is known as moderate dementia. At this stage, your loved one likely needs support with managing medications, preparing meals, handling finances, and keeping up with household chores.

Introduction

Caring for someone with moderate to severe dementia can be meaningful and challenging. At this stage, your loved one needs help with many daily tasks. They may still enjoy familiar faces, favorite music, or simple routines, but memory, judgment, and communication are more limited. Over time, the skills we learn as teenagers and adults (like cooking, shopping, handling money, or using the phone) and even some skills learned in early childhood (like bathing, dressing, eating, or toileting) can require full assistance. Your role as a care partner is to support **comfort, safety, and dignity** each day — with guidance from your **care team** and the practical ideas below.

Day-to-Day Management

Fall Risk and Mobility

As dementia affects attention, judgment, and spatial awareness, your loved one may be at higher risk for falls. **Watch for signs** like unsteady gait, difficulty navigating stairs, tripping over objects, bruises, or unexplained injuries.

Things to try:

- Remove tripping hazards (rugs, clutter, cords).
- Install grab bars in bathrooms and handrails on stairs.
- Ensure good lighting throughout the home.
- Encourage use of mobility aids (canes, walkers) as needed.

Balance / Falls

As memory loss progresses, your loved one is likely to experience difficulty with movement or balance caused by changes in brain regions that control movement. You may notice stiffness, awkward movements, a stooped or leaning posture, or a shuffling walk. Tell your **care team** about any change in walking, posture, stiffness, repetitive motions, or falling.

Things to try:

- Remove throw rugs. Put pads on steps and corners of furniture.
- Get secure, supportive shoes.
- Remove clutter from walking areas.
- Install handrails and grab bars.
- Take your time; rushing increases accident risk.
- If a fall happens: stay calm, reassure your loved one, check for pain or injuries you can see, and watch for swelling, bruises, agitation, or distress.

Wandering

Wandering and exit-seeking behaviors can be alarming. We may not fully stop these behaviors, but we can make adjustments to prevent unsafe situations.

Things to try:

- Put a stop sign on exit doors or a black floor mat in front of exit doors.
- Install locks that are difficult to operate or out of reach.

- Surround your loved one with familiar things. Provide reassurance about where they are and why they are there.
- Even with precautions, people with dementia can sometimes wander out of the house. Consider wearable devices such as a Safe Return bracelet/necklace or a smartwatch to monitor location, sleep, and activity.

Depression/Anxiety

Depression and anxiety are common in people with dementia. In the early stages, they may feel sad or worried as they notice changes in their memory and independence. Later, brain changes can cause these feelings to increase. Depression can look like sadness or losing interest in things, while anxiety can show as worry or restlessness. These feelings can make thinking harder and lead to being upset or not wanting to be around others. Depression and anxiety can occur together in people with dementia and often overlap

Things to try:

- Provide a bright and cheerful environment.
- Increase and encourage activities your loved one can enjoy. Start by finding activities the person enjoyed in the past and modifying them to reflect their current level of function. Keep activities simple and use one- or two-word instructions.
- Encourage social interaction with others. Plan pleasant activities with people your loved one enjoys. Encourage them to talk about happy things from the past or present. Too many visitors can be overwhelming, so encourage one-at-a-time visits.
- Redirect attention when they express feelings of worthlessness, hopelessness, or being a burden.
- **Important safety note**: Threats or statements about wanting to end their life should always be taken seriously. Notify the **care team** immediately if this occurs. Ensure there are no guns, knives, scissors, or tools accessible. Keep medications secured

Sleeping Issues

People with dementia often have trouble sleeping. They might wake up a lot at night, feel confused, or think it’s time to get up when it’s still dark. Some may sleep during the day and stay awake at night. This can make them feel tired, confused, or cranky.

Things to try:

- Review medications with your loved one’s care team to see if any are affecting sleep.
- Keep previous sleeping and waking habits in mind.
- Plan regular physical activity, like a long walk.
- Provide a calm, predictable setting.
- Create and keep a bedtime routine. Go to bed at the same time every night.
- Avoid napping during the day. Avoid alcohol, caffeine, and heavy or spicy foods before bedtime.
- If concerning behaviors such as acting out dreams or wandering are observed, please make your care team aware.
- Remember that any change can affect sleep - sleeping place, caregiver changes, or even different visitors.

Medications

It is important to check your medicines when dealing with a memory or thinking problem to see if any of them might be making it worse. Some medicines can cause confusion, forgetfulness, or trouble focusing. We will review your current medication list to see if any should be changed or stopped to help your brain work its best. We will then adjust your prescriptions if needed.

Tests & Images

When someone starts having trouble with memory or thinking, doctors may order blood tests, brain pictures (like an MRI or CT scan), or hearing or vision tests to learn more. Doing these tests helps find the cause and choose the best way to help your brain stay as healthy as possible. If needed, we will order tests for you. We will provide you with a list of what, if anything, needs to be done as next steps.

Referrals

We may want you to see other doctors from time to time. They will partner with us in managing your thinking and memory concerns. We will provide you with the referral details when needed.

Future Planning

Future planning is important for people who are starting to have memory or thinking problems. It is important to think about financial and medical matters while you can still clearly make choices. You can explain what matters most to you. Your family and care team will know what you want. By planning early, you can set up your loved ones with paperwork to step in for you when needed. If you have done this before, it is important to think about it again now.

Financial Power of Attorney	✗	Has not completed
Medical Power of Attorney	✓	Has completed
Discussion of Life Support	✗	Has not completed

Next Steps

Have a family meeting to review advance care planning and goals of care.

Local Resources

We will support you in finding community resources and services. We can help you find the ones that focus on your areas of concern. We will provide you with a separate list of resources and their phone numbers. If needed, we can help you connect with them.