

CHARACTERISTICS LEVELS OF DEMENTIA

LEVEL 1 MILD IMPAIRMENT Early Stages

- ✓ Able to read and understand
- ✓ Able to understand and follow simple directives that are clearly stated
- ✓ Social skills usually intact during short conversations
- ✓ Short term memory difficulties begin
- ✓ Hesitation in decision making
- ✓ Difficulty in learning new skills – use of familiar skills is successful
- ✓ May need SUPERVISION with life skills:
 - Help with organization
 - Help with sequencing
- ✓ Skill level – able to perform most skills learned as an adult

LEVEL 2 MILD IMPAIRMENT Mid Stages

- ✓ Attention span – 5-10 minutes – easily distracted
- ✓ Able to read mechanically but unable to understand what they read
- ✓ Losing ability to process ideas and concepts – loses ability to make concrete decisions
- ✓ Understands 1 out of 3 words spoken to them
- ✓ Difficulty in word finding – vocabulary significantly reduced
- ✓ Difficulty understand ordinary conversation between two people
- ✓ Will need LIMITED ASSISTANCE and cueing with life skills
 - Visual – demonstrate
 - Verbal – simple directives
 - Tactile – touch
- ✓ Skill level – able to perform skills typically learned prior to the age of 12

LEVEL 3 SEVERE IMPAIRMENT Late Stages

- ✓ Attention span – 1-2 minutes
- ✓ Loss of ability to recognize names and faces
- ✓ Loss of ability to understand word meanings
- ✓ Responds to non-verbal communication – reads body language
- ✓ Responds negatively to negative approach
- ✓ Loss of ability to make decisions – still able to make needs known through yes/no answers
- ✓ Vocabulary is limited to one or two words
- ✓ Will need EXTENSIVE ASSISTANCE with most life skills
 - Cueing – visual and tactile
 - Hand/UNDER/hand when skill is gone
- ✓ Skill level – able to perform skills typically learned prior to the age of 5

LEVEL 4 PROFOUND IMPAIRMENT End Stages

- ✓ Essentially non-verbal
- ✓ Loses ability to feed self – doesn't understand what utensils are
- ✓ No longer aware of environment
- ✓ Responds negatively to loud noises and to sensory overload
- ✓ Mobility begins to be unsteady due to muscles and joints becoming rigid
- ✓ Responds to sensory enrichment
- ✓ Becomes TOTALLY DEPENDENT on others for help with life skills
 - Hand/UNDER/hand used exclusively
 - May be able to person simple tasks
- ✓ Skill level – skills learned prior to the age of 15 months