

## DEMENTIA

Dementia is an umbrella term for a variety of different brain disorders that cause a decline in mental ability severe enough to interfere with daily life

### The Early Warning Signs of Dementia

- Memory loss that disrupts daily life
- Challenges in planning or solving problems
- Confusion with time or place
- Difficulty completing familiar tasks
- Trouble understanding visual images
- New problems with words in speaking or writing
- Misplacing things
- Decreased or poor judgment
- Withdrawal from work or social activities
- Changes in mood or personality



## DEMENTIA AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

- It might be difficult to recognize dementia in individuals with DD as they may already display many of the warning signs such as decreased memory or judgment
- The first signs of dementia might be behavioural changes and/or increased aggression

### Signs of Dementia in People with Developmental Disabilities

- Refusing to participate in program and activities that were once pleasurable
- Loss of learned skills
- Increase in stereotypical behaviours (rocking, etc.)
- Increased dependence
- Loss of words (May be mistaken for something desirable if the person normally has challenging verbal ability)
- Loss of weight (May be mistaken for something desirable if the person is overweight)
- Irritability and/or aggression
- Personality changes
- Seizures where none were previously present

### DEMENTIA & DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES TIPS

- ✓ Establish a daily routine
- ✓ Monitor bowel, sleeping, eating and drinking patterns
- ✓ Watch for changes in behaviour after changes in medication
- ✓ Ensure the person has their hearing aids, glasses and assistive devices
- ✓ Report any changes in behaviour you notice

### PSEUDODEMENTIA

- Generally looks like dementia, however symptoms are caused by something else, such as:
  - Psychiatric illness
  - Thyroid disease
  - Infection
  - Drug interactions
  - See more below
- It is often difficult to determine what condition is causing the pseudodementia
- Treatment depends on the cause and will reverse the pseudodementia

### PSEUDODEMENTIA AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

- The pseudodementia is difficult to recognize and typically present for quite a while before diagnosis
- Like dementia, this is because the early warning signs are not as obvious in someone with a developmental disability
- Usually the first signs are changes to behaviour and/or aggression

### CAUSES OF PSEUDOMENTIA IN PEOPLE WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES

- Decreased vision or hearing
- Sensory overload
- Decline in mobility (may prevent participation)
- Pain resulting in behaviour changes
- Poor nutrition and hydration
- Constipation
- Polypharmacy
- Medical conditions (Heart problems, thyroid, dysfunction, infections, pneumonia, arthritis, osteoporosis etc.)
- Depression
- Sleep apnea ( Can lead to depression, irritability and personality changes)