



Dementia Communication

LEWY BODY DEMENTIA CAREGIVING SYMPOSIUM

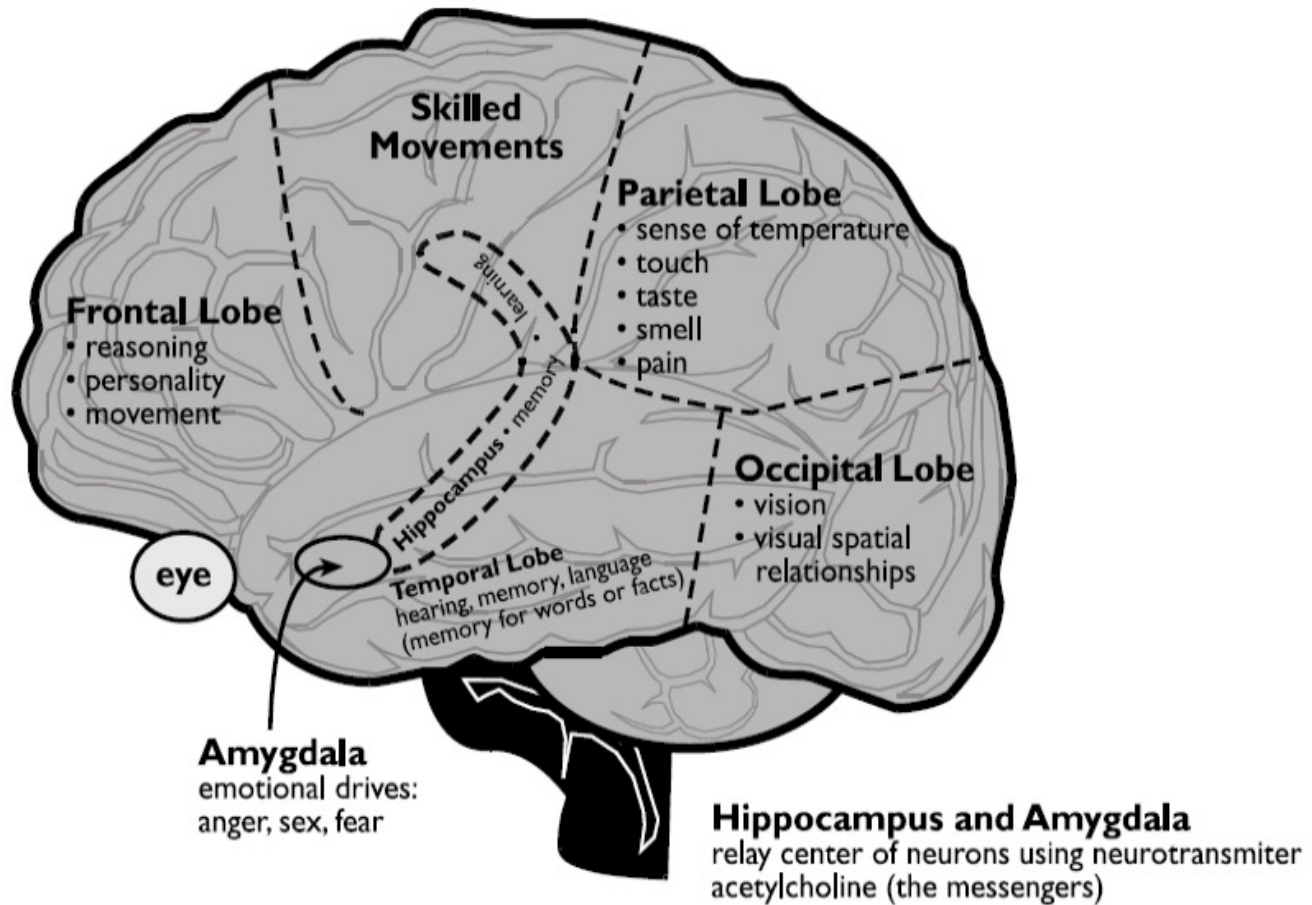
Christina Irving, LCSW
Client Services Director

October 14, 2023

Symptoms of Lewy Body Dementia?

- Dementia symptoms
- Fluctuating cognition
- Hallucinations/delusions
- Parkinsonism symptoms
- Sleep Difficulties
- Problems regulating body functions
- Apathy

How Dementia Affects the Brain



Cognitive Changes

- Memory loss may not be as severe
 - Difficult for others to recognize
- Changes in ability to reason, focus, and understand
 - Old ways of communicating may not work
- Cognitive abilities vary throughout the day
 - Not knowing what to expect
 - Are they faking it?



Principles for Understanding and Communicating

- Understand what is and isn't possible to change.
- Understand that our thoughts, attitudes and actions affect person with dementia.
- Recognize that a behavior most often results from a cause; look for triggers.
- Personal connection is more important than content.

Tips for Interacting with Someone with Dementia

- Reassure, reassure
- Remain calm
- Don't argue
- Give compliments
- Respond to feelings
- Use distractions
- OK to alter the truth
- Avoid short-term memory questions
- Break down tasks

Caregiver Thoughts that Fuel Frustration

- “They know better than that!”
- “They could do that yesterday!”
- “They’re not doing all they can!”
- “They did that on purpose!”
- “They need to just listen!”
- “I just answered that question!”
- “They never say thank you!”
- “They treat me like a servant!”



Handling Difficult Behavior

- We cannot change the person
 - Accommodation, not control
 - We can change **our** behavior
- Check with the doctor
- Behavior has a purpose
- What works today may not work tomorrow
- Get support from others

Behavior Has a Purpose

- Looking for the familiar
- Seeking something to do
- Physical needs/pain
- Need to express fear or anger
- Want to maintain some personal control



Common Pitfalls

- Being reasonable, rational, and logical won't work
- People with dementia don't need to be grounded in reality
- Making agreements doesn't work
- It's easy to both overestimate and underestimate what a person with dementia can do

Hallucinations/Delusions

- Hallucinations are usually visual
- Delusions are false beliefs, judgements, perceptions
- May or may not recognize that they're not real
 - Don't contradict or reinforce
 - Provide reassurance
 - Redirect and distract

Changes You Can Make

- Simplify the environment
- Simplify tasks and establish a routine
- Allow rest between stimulating events
- Use labels to cue or remind the person
- Equip doors with safety locks/alarms
- Use lighting to reduce confusion and restlessness at night

Communicating with Someone with Dementia Means ...

- Acknowledging and building on their strengths and preferences
- Being patient, understanding and creative
- Taking a deep breath and trying again
- Taking joy in the simple things!



Other Resources

- **Brain Support Network**
 - www.brainsupportnetwork.org
- **AARP Home Alone Alliance Family Caregiving How-To video series**
 - <https://www.aarp.org/ppi/initiatives/home-alone-alliance/family-caregiving-videos/>
- **Lewy Body Dementia Association** — www.lbda.org
- **Alzheimer's Association 24-hour Helpline** - www.alz.org
 - 800.272.3900
- **YouTube channels** for:
 - Family Caregiver Alliance (<https://www.youtube.com/user/CAREGIVERdotORG>)
 - UCSF Memory and Aging Center (<https://www.youtube.com/c/UCSFMemoryandAgingCenter>)
 - Teepa Snow (<https://www.youtube.com/@teepasnowvideos>)

FCA Services

Serving San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin

- Information and Referral
- Education
 - Online resources
 - Fact sheets
 - Webinars
 - Videos
- Family Consultation/Assessment
- Care planning
- Support groups
- Respite
- Legal/Financial Information

www.caregiver.org

415.434.3388

California Caregiver Resource Centers



[HOME](#) | [FIND YOUR LOCAL CENTER](#) | [RESOURCES](#) | [ABOUT US](#)

[LANGUAGE](#) ▼



Are You a Caregiver?

The term caregiver refers to anyone who provides physical, emotional, financial, or logistical support to someone with a disabling condition. It is important for them to know about the free resources available to support!

Find out if you are a caregiver by taking the quiz below.

[AM I A CAREGIVER? QUIZ](#)



www.caregivercalifornia.org

Christina Irving, LCSW
Client Services Director

info@caregiver.org

800.445.8106 | www.caregiver.org

