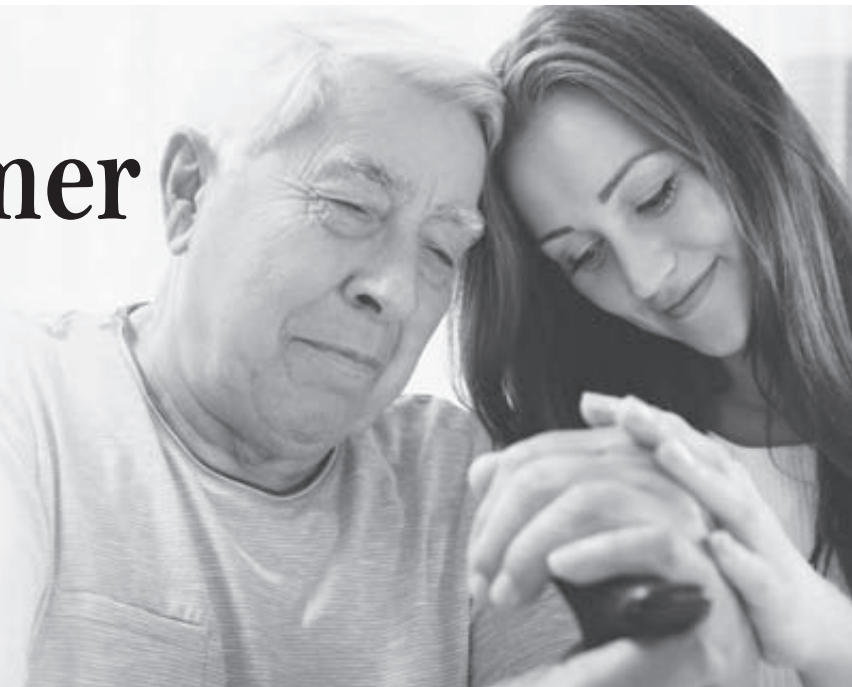


January is Alzheimer Awareness Month

Memories are erased a little more each day but remain engraved in our hearts for always



THE CANADIAN CHARTER OF RIGHTS FOR PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA

If you or a loved one are among the more than half a million Canadians living with dementia, it's possible you've experienced or witnessed some form of discrimination or stigma as a result. Because it's sometimes difficult for people with dementia to stand up for their rights, the Alzheimer's Society of Canada has released the Canadian Charter of Rights for People with Dementia.

Created by the society's advisory group, the Charter of Rights was written by and for people living with dementia. It ensures that those afflicted can become aware of their rights and empowers them to advocate for themselves. It also enables caregivers who support people with dementia to become familiar with these rights.

The charter includes the right to:

- Be free from discrimination of any kind
- Benefit from Canada's civic and legal rights

- Participate in developing and implementing policies that affect their lives
- Access support that allows them to live independently and be engaged in their community
- Access the information and support needed to participate in decisions regarding their own care and diagnosis
- Expect that their doctors and caregivers are trained in human rights and are held accountable for protecting these rights
- Access effective complaint and appeal procedures when their rights aren't protected or respected

Not only will this charter help people with dementia advocate for themselves, it will also allow policy makers, health and social service providers and other government agencies to identify the changes that are needed to improve the lives and treatment of people with dementia and their caregivers. To learn more, visit www.alzheimer.ca.

TEN WARNING SIGNS

Whether you're experiencing possible symptoms or are concerned for someone you care about, the Alzheimer Society has developed the following list of signs to look for:

1. Memory loss affecting day-to-day abilities – forgetting things often or struggling to retain new information.
2. Difficulty performing familiar tasks – forgetting how to do something you've been doing your whole life, such as preparing a meal or getting dressed.
3. Problems with language – forgetting words or substituting words that don't fit the context.
4. Disorientation in time and space – not knowing what day of the week it is or getting lost in a familiar place.
5. Impaired judgment – not recognizing a medical problem that needs attention or wearing light clothing on a cold day.
6. Problems with abstract thinking – not understanding what numbers signify on a calculator, for example, or how they're used.
7. Misplacing things – putting things in strange places, like an iron in the freezer or a wristwatch in the sugar bowl.
8. Changes in mood and behaviour – exhibiting severe mood swings from being easy-going to quick-tempered.
9. Changes in personality – behaving out of character such as feeling paranoid or threatened.
10. Loss of initiative – losing interest in friends, family or favourite activities.

If you are concerned about any of these signs, talk to your doctor. The "10 warning signs" brochure is also available from your local Alzheimer Society, or you can download the brochure online at www.alzheimer.ca

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