

**SOMETIMES,
I HAVE
SOMETHING
TO SAY
BUT THE WORD
I WANT IS
LOST OR COMES
OUT WRONG.**

KNOW WHERE ALZHEIMER'S HIDES.

People with intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD) may experience the challenges of dementia in different ways than people without disabilities and older adults. All changes for a person with I/DD should be considered in relation to the abilities they had previously — their baseline. Family, friends, and trusted staff who see a person daily are often the experts in recognizing and noticing these changes.

alzheimer's 
association


The Arc
Wisconsin


Aging & Disability Resource Center



10 WARNING SIGNS OF ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

1 MEMORY LOSS THAT DISRUPTS DAILY LIFE.

For a person with I/DD, any forgetfulness that you suspect may be related to dementia should be noted as a significant change from their previous ability. A person normally may have trouble remembering things, however, a change may be indicated by the need for more prompts than they used to require.

2 CHALLENGES IN PLANNING OR SOLVING PROBLEMS.

Some people may experience changes in their ability to follow a plan. They may have difficulty concentrating and take much longer to do things than they did before and have trouble with typical every day decisions like what to pack for lunch, how to dress for the weather or deciding what they want to do each day.

3 DIFFICULTY COMPLETING FAMILIAR TASKS AT HOME, AT WORK OR AT LEISURE.

People with I/DD may have the appearance of poor concentration or poor attention when attempting to do regular tasks that they used to enjoy.

4 CONFUSION WITH TIME OR PLACE.

For a person with I/DD, confusion would be marked by a change from their previous ability or sense of time. This may appear as confusion about activities or places they visit that are part of their daily routine.

5 MISPLACING THINGS AND LOSING THE ABILITY TO RETRACE STEPS.

This is only a sign if it is a change from previous functioning. If someone has always had challenges keeping track of or organizing things and is consistent in this behavior, it would not be a warning sign.

6 TROUBLE UNDERSTANDING VISUAL IMAGES AND SPATIAL RELATIONSHIPS.

In addition to vision changes, seizures that begin or reoccur in later adulthood may be a warning sign for people with Down Syndrome.

7 NEW PROBLEMS WITH WORDS IN SPEAKING OR WRITING.

The way a person communicates may change. Their vocabulary may be decreased, they may use more limited word choices, or they may have trouble answering questions or following directions.

8 DECREASED OR POOR JUDGMENT.

People may neglect themselves. They may not spend as much time on their personal hygiene, they may not be attentive to or understand situations where they should be cautious, and they may not eat well.

9 WITHDRAWAL FROM WORK OR SOCIAL ACTIVITIES.

Some people with I/DD may choose not to engage in certain social or work activities throughout their life. That is okay. However, someone who is experiencing dementia-related changes may start to lose their ability to hold or follow a conversation and, as a result, may begin withdrawing from social encounters or hobbies. They may lose the confidence to engage in that way with people.

10 CHANGES IN MOOD AND PERSONALITY.

Personality changes or mood changes are especially relevant if a person becomes more upset than would be anticipated or if this is happening with increased frequency. Look for uncharacteristic over-reactions and emotional outbursts.

Learn how to access local care and support resources at alz.org/Wisconsin or through The Arc Wisconsin at arcwi.org