

## What can you do now?

There are many things you can do to retain your abilities and your quality of life.

- ✓ **Learn about your condition.** The more you know, the easier it is to plan for the future. At the early stages, you are still able to participate in discussions and decisions that will affect you later. You can make your preferences known, which will benefit you and ease the burden on the people who care about you.
- ✓ **Build activities, habits, and routines to be the healthiest possible.** Eat well, stay active, maintain your social connections, and get a good night's sleep!
- ✓ **Minding your health** will also help control or reduce the risk of other conditions that can affect your brain health, such as diabetes, heart disease, and stroke.
- ✓ **Building healthy habits** is also important for the people who offer you care.

Reach out for support. You are not alone. Resources are available to inform and support you and your family.

## WE CARE

We hope the information discussed here is useful for your care planning. For further support on these and other issues related to memory loss and caregiving, please call the Care2Caregivers Helpline. Our dedicated, understanding professional staff, who have also been family caregivers, are here to listen and guide you.



WHEN YOU CARE • WE ARE THERE

### For more information:

Comprehensive Services on Aging (COPSA) has been providing compassionate and sensitive mental health care to the elderly since 1975. A team of Geriatric Psychiatrists, Social Workers and Case Managers are available to assist families with diagnosis and treatment. COPSA also provides training for professionals, family caregivers and the community on issues related to aging, memory and mental health.

Care2Caregivers provides resources, referrals, information and supportive counseling to anyone caring for someone with memory loss. Call for help.

**HELPLINE: 800.424.2494**  
**[www.Care2Caregivers.com](http://www.Care2Caregivers.com)**

# RUTGERS HEALTH

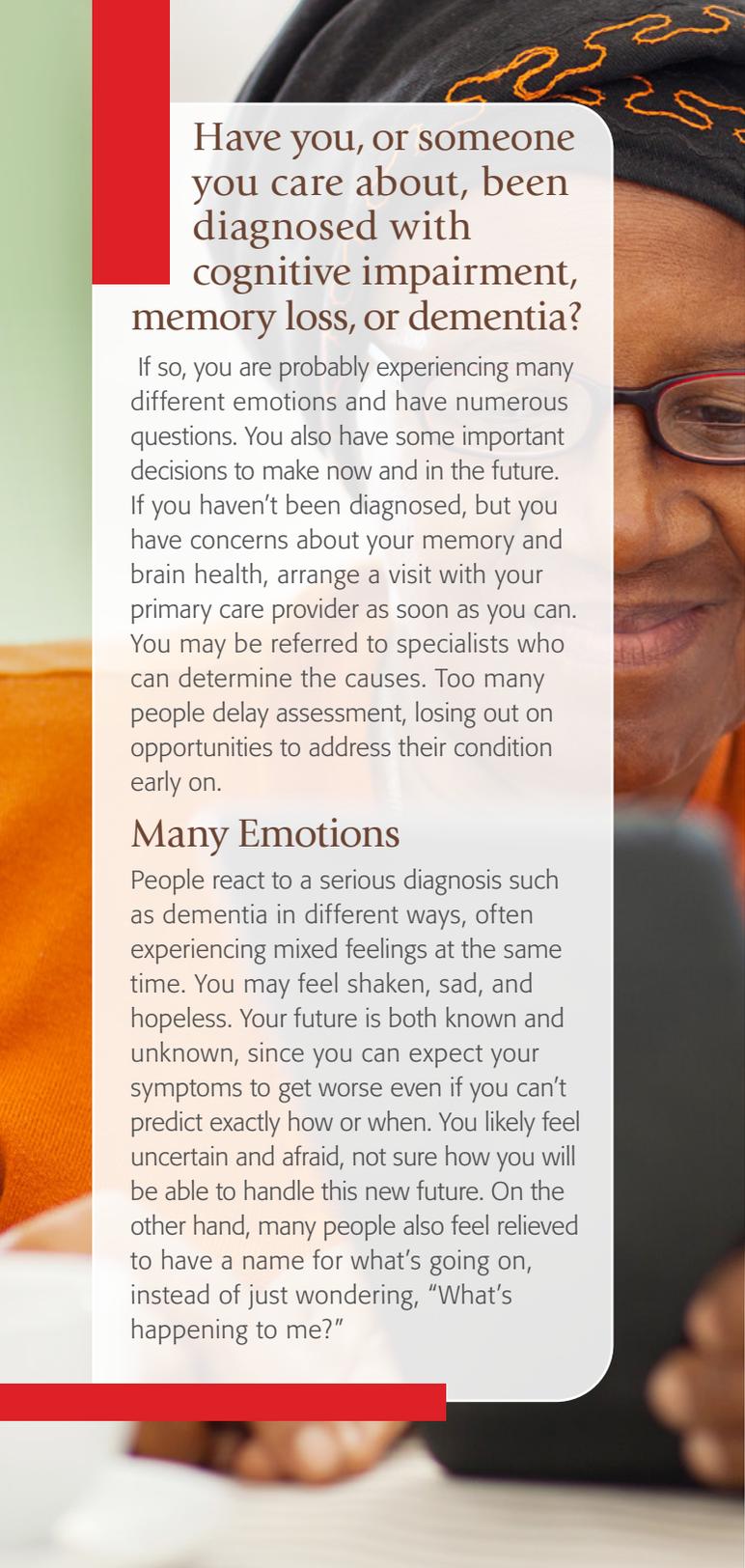
University Behavioral Health Care  
COPSA Institute for Alzheimer's Disease & Related Disorders

# RUTGERS HEALTH

University Behavioral Health Care  
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## NEWLY DIAGNOSED: What now?

### Tips for coping, caring and planning after receiving a dementia diagnosis



## Have you, or someone you care about, been diagnosed with cognitive impairment, memory loss, or dementia?

If so, you are probably experiencing many different emotions and have numerous questions. You also have some important decisions to make now and in the future. If you haven't been diagnosed, but you have concerns about your memory and brain health, arrange a visit with your primary care provider as soon as you can. You may be referred to specialists who can determine the causes. Too many people delay assessment, losing out on opportunities to address their condition early on.

### Many Emotions

People react to a serious diagnosis such as dementia in different ways, often experiencing mixed feelings at the same time. You may feel shaken, sad, and hopeless. Your future is both known and unknown, since you can expect your symptoms to get worse even if you can't predict exactly how or when. You likely feel uncertain and afraid, not sure how you will be able to handle this new future. On the other hand, many people also feel relieved to have a name for what's going on, instead of just wondering, "What's happening to me?"



### Many Questions

In addition to a flood of emotions, getting a serious diagnosis like dementia often causes a rush of questions. For example, people wonder: "What is it? What will happen to me? How long will I live? What will my life be like? How will having this affect the people I care about?" It can be difficult to get the answers to these questions. Healthcare providers may not have time to discuss these concerns. The internet can be a mass of confusing and inaccurate information. One good place to start is the National Institute on Aging ([nih.gov](http://nih.gov)), which includes a library on health topics, including dementia. There, you can learn about different types of dementia and find other useful information and resources.

### Many Decisions

Having a serious health condition like dementia means that you will have many different decisions to make over time. The most immediate is deciding who to tell, when to tell them, and how to explain it. Think carefully about who needs to know, as well as any people in your life who you want to know. Recognize that others who have spent time with you recently may already know or suspect that something is

going on. They may hesitate to ask but will appreciate hearing the news directly from you or a family member.

Soon you will want to begin thinking ahead. Identify your practical needs. For example, maybe you realize you will need to stop driving soon, which means you may need help with transportation. Consider your emotional needs. Do you want someone to listen to you or just sit with you or help you stay active doing things you enjoy? Start building your support network as you discuss your diagnosis with friends and family. If you have options in choosing healthcare providers, find or build a team you can trust, with providers who listen to you. Discuss your needs and preferences with your family and your informal supporters, as well as your healthcare providers.



**800.424.2494**

[www.COPSAInstitute.com](http://www.COPSAInstitute.com)

