

This Weekly Newsletter
is brought to you by

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Legal Power for Seniors

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November is National Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month

The Seven Stages of Alzheimer's Disease

According to www.alz.org (the website for the Alzheimer's Association), there are 7 stages in the development of this disease. Stage 1 is really a baseline and represents normal functioning. In Stage 2 - there is evidence of mild cognitive decline, but at this point, even medical professionals are not able to definitively diagnose the disease. At this stage, there may be some minor forgetfulness about nouns or location of objects. However, this could be part of the normal aging process.

Stage 3 is when more symptoms appear. Yet, even at this stage, a definitive diagnosis can be made only some of the time. Some of the signs that begin to manifest themselves during this stage are: more frequent problems with word retrieval of objects and new people's names, forgetting information that one has just read about, mild confusion in social and work settings, and the beginning of trouble with planning and organizing in general. This stage is characterized as mild cognitive decline.

Stage 4 represents a moderate cognitive decline and could be characterized as the first point in which a medical professional can diagnose the disorder. Family members, too, at this stage will begin to notice a decline in their loved one's functioning. This stage is distinguished by things such as: forgetting recent events, inability of performing mental arithmetic such as counting backwards from 100 by 6's, increased difficulty in carrying out events of daily living like planning meals and paying bills, forgetting things about one's own life, or becoming withdrawn or quiet in new and unfamiliar social situations.

The Seven Stages of Alzheimer's Disease (con't.)

In Stage 5 (moderately severe cognitive decline), the individual with Alzheimer's will begin to need assistance with daily activities. He/she will be uncertain of the day of the week and where they are. They may need help in choosing what clothing to select depending on the occasion or season. However, they still should be able to eat and use the toilet without assistance. At this stage begins the inability to recall vital information such as one's address or telephone number.

In Stage 6 (severe cognitive decline), all the characteristics of Stage 5 are more severe and frequent. The forgetfulness increases to the point where faces are remembered but not names, even when they are a spouse or caregiver. Assistance is needed in dressing. If not, the individual is likely to dress inappropriately by putting outer wear over pajamas, etc. There may be changes in sleep patterns and/or personality and behavioral changes. In addition, there is the tendency to wander or get lost. Therefore, this stage represents the stage at which constant supervision is required.

In Stage 7 (very severe cognitive decline), the individual, in addition to further cognitive decline, loses physical capabilities as well. They may no longer be able to smile, to sit without support, to hold one's head up, to walk, or even to swallow. Frequently, there is no longer the ability to speak or attend to one's personal needs independently. This is the final stage which can last months and even years.

While Alzheimer's Disease is not something one would choose, it is helpful to know what the stages are, so appropriate planning can be made. The attorneys and staff at the Hook Law Center are experts in the area of long-term care planning and care of the elderly and /or disabled. Establishing a trust may be one way to finance the care of a relative with Alzheimer's.

In any case, advice is given on an individual basis considering the unique circumstances of each person in order to maximize and protect their assets. (Information taken from www.alz.org)



Pets and Adults with Alzheimer's or Dementia

Hook Law Center: Kit Kat, how can pets help people with Alzheimer's disease or dementia?

Kit Kat: Well, what I've observed is that people with Alzheimer's or dementia become very childlike in their interests and behavior. My mom's mother has Alzheimer's, and she just loves it when she sees a dog or a cat. She strokes the animal over and over and looks right into their eyes, like they're one of her children. For her, the animal is nonverbal, just like she is. She can relate to them. Plus, our soft fur apparently feels good to her hands. Pets are active, and it gives the person with Alzheimer's something to focus on that is concrete. They no longer can think about concepts, but something they can see brings them a lot of pleasure. We pets love to please, and we ask nothing in return except to be showered with attention.

For other people with Alzheimer's, according to research at the University of California at Davis School of Veterinary Medicine, pets can ease the stress some of them feel. They have found that certain people with Alzheimer's have fewer outbursts if there is a pet in the home. (www.helpguide.org/life/pets.htm) So you can see, we pets play a valuable role in helping people with Alzheimer's maintain a quality of life they might not otherwise have.

Upcoming Events

- Hook Law Center is presenting a Veteran's Aid & Attendance Seminar at Memory Care at Norfolk, 1516 Harmon Street, Norfolk, VA 23518 on **tonight at 6 p.m.** To r.s.v.p., please call 757-588-4663 or 757-399-7506.
- Hook Law Center is presenting a Veteran's Aid & Attendance Seminar at Georgian Manor, 651 Riverwalk Parkway, Chesapeake, VA 23320-6819 on **November 14, 2012 at 6 p.m.** To r.s.v.p., please call 757-436-9618 or 757-399-7506.
- Hook Law Center is presenting a Veteran's Aid & Attendance Seminar at The Ballentine, 7211 Granby Street, Norfolk, VA 23505 on **December 12, 2012 at 6 p.m.** To r.s.v.p., please call 757-440-7400 or 757-399-7506.

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