



# The Gathering Place Newsletter

**Issue 65**

**October 2017**

Mission Statement::

The Gathering Place at Lakewood UMC is a ministry for those who are living with memory loss and the people who love them.



*"Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me" – Matthew 25:40*



## Suspicion, Delusions and Alzheimer's

A person with Alzheimer's may become suspicious of those around them, even accusing others of theft, infidelity or other improper behavior. While accusations can be hurtful, remember that the disease is causing these behaviors and try not to take offense.

### What to expect

Delusions (firmly held beliefs in things that are not real) may occur in middle- to late-stage Alzheimer's. Confusion and memory loss — such as the inability to remember certain people or objects — can contribute to these untrue beliefs. A person with Alzheimer's may believe a family member is stealing his or her possessions or that he or she is being followed by the police. Although not grounded in reality, the situation is very real to the person with dementia. Keep in mind that a person with dementia is trying to make sense of his or her world with declining cognitive function.

A delusion is not the same thing as a hallucination. While delusions involve false beliefs, hallucinations are false perceptions of objects or events that are sensory in nature. When individuals with Alzheimer's have a hallucination, they see, hear, smell, taste or even feel something that isn't really there.

### See the Doctor

If a person with Alzheimer's is having severe delusions and there is a fear of self harm or caregiver harm, or if the delusion or hallucination is extremely troubling to the person, it's important to have a medical evaluation to determine if medication is needed. The first line of treatment for the behavioral symptoms of Alzheimer's is non-drug approaches, but if these strategies fail and symptoms are severe, medications may be appropriate. While antipsychotic medications can be effective in some situations, they are associated with an increased risk of stroke and death in older adults with dementia and must be used carefully. Work with the doctor to learn both the risks and benefits of medication before making a decision.

### How to respond

#### Don't take offense.

Listen to what is troubling the person, and try to understand that reality. Then be reassuring, and let the person know you care.

#### Don't argue or try to convince.

Allow the individual to express ideas. Acknowledge his or her opinions.

#### Offer a simple answer.

Share your thoughts with the individual, but keep it simple. Don't overwhelm the person with lengthy explanations or reasons.

#### Switch the focus to another activity.

Engage the individual in an activity, or ask for help with a chore.

#### Duplicate any lost items.

If the person is often searching for a specific item, have several available. For example, if the individual is always looking for his or her wallet, purchase two of the same kind.

#### Share your experience with others.

Join a support community to share what response strategies have worked for you and get more ideas from other caregivers.

## Common Ground Caregiver Conversations

Common Ground is a place and time for caregivers like you to meet, talk, share, learn and receive the support needed to take care of yourselves so you can provide the best care possible to a family member or friend.

Common Ground is a free caregiver assistance program of Interfaith CarePartners® in cooperation with partner congregations in greater Houston. Groups are available for caregivers of persons with dementia and caregivers for persons with other diagnoses and conditions.

Lakewood will be hosting Common Ground on October 11th from 10:15-11:30 am in the Parlor. For more information, contact Pam Cline at 281.370.2273 or [pam.cline@lakewoodumc.org](mailto:pam.cline@lakewoodumc.org).

*Rejoice in the Lord  
always. I will say it again:  
Rejoice! Let your gentle-  
ness be evident to all. The  
Lord is near. Do not be  
anxious about anything,  
but in everything, by  
prayer and petition, with  
thanksgiving, present your  
requests to God. And the  
peace of God, which trans-  
cends all understanding,  
will guard your hearts and  
your minds in Christ Jesus  
(Philippians 4:4-7)*

Lakewood United Methodist Church  
11330 Louetta  
Houston, TX 77070  
281.370.2273

In partnership with  
Interfaith CarePartners®  
713.682.5995