

THE GUIDED LIGHT

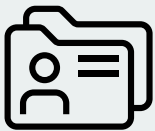
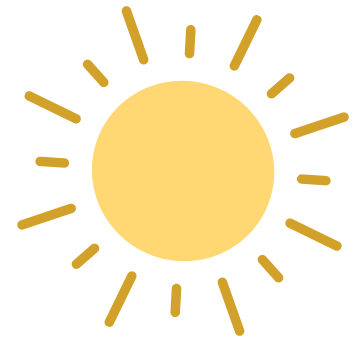
LA CROSSE COUNTY'S DEMENTIA NEWSLETTER
FOR HOPE, SUPPORT, AND RESOURCES



Working with Dementia: *Support for Caregivers and Early-Stage Individuals*

Work and purpose are important parts of life, even when dementia enters the picture. Some people in the early stages of dementia choose to remain employed, adjusting responsibilities while finding meaning in their work. At the same time, many caregivers are balancing careers with the demands of providing daily care. Both experiences can be challenging—but also possible—with the right supports.

This edition of The Guided Light explores strategies for those living with dementia who are still in the workforce, as well as resources for caregivers managing both employment and caregiving responsibilities.



Did you know... Employment, Caregiving & Dementia

- About 60% of caregivers are employed, yet many must adjust their schedules—57% arrive late, leave early, or take time off; 18% reduce hours from full-time to part-time, and 9% leave work entirely to provide care.
- Approximately 27% of individuals with Alzheimer's disease remain employed.
- Approximately 27% of individuals with Alzheimer's disease are employed.
- Nearly 1 in 5 U.S. workers are age 65 or older, and the prevalence of Alzheimer's and other dementias rises with age (1 in 9 Americans 65+ lives with Alzheimer's). As the population ages, cognitive impairment in the workplace is increasing, creating challenges for employers in supporting affected employees.

Source: *Alzheimer's Association Facts & Figures*

Support is Within Reach

Whether you're navigating work while living with dementia yourself or balancing a career while caring for someone you love, remember that you are not alone. Supports, accommodations, and community resources are available to help you thrive. Give the ADRC a call to get started 608-785-5700.

October 2025 Edition

Sign up for this newsletter :
adrc@lacrossecounty.org

Cover



PEOPLE LIVING IN THE EARLY STAGES WHILE WORKING

For individuals in the early stages of dementia, continuing to work can provide purpose, routine, and social connection. Many maintain independence and continue performing work, driving, volunteering, and other daily activities for several years. However, changes in memory, concentration, or communication may make some tasks more challenging over time. Each person's situation is unique—some may benefit from small adjustments, while others may need reduced hours or modified responsibilities. Disclosure of a diagnosis is a personal decision, but sharing it with a supervisor or HR can allow for reasonable accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). With supportive workplaces—such as flexible schedules, role modifications, and other adjustments—many people can successfully remain employed and continue finding meaning in their work.

Tips

- **Prioritize Brain Health:** Ensure quality sleep, regular exercise, focus on nutrition and address stress and grief.
- **Create Structure:** Keep consistent daily schedules and tasks can reduce challenges and improve focus.
- **Use Tools:** calendars, reminders, and task lists can help you to stay organized.
- **Consider accommodations:** Reduced hours, simplified duties, or flexible schedules may make work more manageable.
- **Know your rights:** Talk with HR about protections under ADA and Family Medical Leave (for yourself).

Resources

- **Aging & Disability Resource Centers (ADRC)** –Assistance with early planning, workplace support, and community connections. Elder or Disability Benefit Specialist –Free, confidential help with benefits, workplace rights, and planning.
- **Department of Workforce Development** – Disability Services have support for employees and job seekers with cognitive or other disabilities.
- **Wisconsin Alzheimer's Institute** – Education, support, and community programs for those recently diagnosed.
- **Job Accommodation Network (JAN)** – Guidance on workplace accommodations.

FOR CAREGIVERS BALANCING EMPLOYMENT AND CARE

Caregiving while working can create significant challenges, often affecting job performance, financial stability, and even the caregiver's own health if supports aren't in place. Many caregivers experience increased stress, reduced productivity, or the need to cut back on hours, which can lead to long-term financial strain. Fortunately, both the Federal and Wisconsin Family and Medical Leave Acts (FMLA) provide job-protected leave options that allow caregivers time away from work to provide care without risking employment. Knowing these protections—and pairing them with workplace resources like flexible scheduling or employee assistance programs—can make a meaningful difference in balancing work and caregiving responsibilities.

Tips

- **Prioritize well-being:** coping with grief and emotional stressors, asking for help by delegating and setting boundaries, having time 'off' or away from caregiving are all vital.
- **Leverage Technology:** Video calls, telehealth, and remote monitoring devices.
- **Plan for Emergencies:** Have key contacts, care instructions, and medical information easily accessible.
- **Know Your Rights and Options:** Familiarize yourself with FMLA, ADA, and employer-specific leave or accommodation policies, inquire with local ADRC about caregiver grants and programs.
- **Communicate early:** Talk with your personal network about your role changes, inquire with your supervisor and human resources about flexible schedules, remote work, or leave policies.

Resources

- **WI Family Caregiver Support** – Education, respite, and support available at ADRCs.
- **WI FMLA Guide** – Understanding state and federal leave protections.
- **Respite Care Association WI** – statewide respite and funding.
- **Caregiver Wishes EndAlz Fest Foundation**– local nonprofit offering funding.
- **Great Lakes Inter-Tribal Council – Elder Services** – Support for Native caregivers, including cultural programs.
- **AARP Working Caregivers**– Guidance, workplace tips, and advocacy for employees.
- **National Alliance for Caregiving**– Research-driven offering reports, workplace guidance, and policy resources.
- **Caregiver Action Network**– Peer support forums, education and free toolkits for caregivers.

How to Help: Early Signs at Work



As the workforce ages, more employees may experience early-stage Alzheimer's or other dementias. Human Resource professionals, caregivers, and coworkers all play a key role in noticing early signs, providing support, and helping ensure appropriate workplace accommodations. Acting early can help employees maintain productivity, reduce stress, and access the care and resources they need. Human Resource Professionals can reach out to Aging and Disability Resource Centers for business support and resources available such as dementia friendly and caregiver trainings and education.

Watch For:



- **Memory lapses:** forgetting meetings, or deadlines.
- **Difficulty with familiar tasks:** struggling with software, instructions, or routine responsibilities.
- **Language and communication:** repeating information or struggling to find words.
- **Disorientation or confusion:** to time, place, or coworkers.
- **Behavior or mood changes:** irritability, withdrawal, or unusual reactions.

Approach with Empathy:



- Choose a private, calm setting for discussions.
- Focus on well-being rather than performance.
- Use specific, observable examples of changes.
- Encourage professional evaluation with a primary care provider.

Strategies:



- Engage human resources discreetly and frame the conversation around support and wellness.
- Explore accommodations under ADA/FMLA: flexible hours, modified workload, or remote work.
- Document observable changes factually to guide discussions.
- Share resources: Employee Assistance Programs, counseling, or caregiver support groups, Aging and Disability Resource Center, Online tools from AARP or Alzheimer's Association.

Supporting at Work and Home:



- Maintain structured routines and visual reminders.
- Promote brain-healthy habits: exercise, balanced diet, quality sleep, social engagement.
- Encourage joint medical appointments framed as wellness checks.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR! Programs/Events This Quarter October - November - December 2025

Caregiver Education: Financial Matters

Learn basics of estate planning and make sense of the different types of accounts.

Tuesday October 7th | 1:00-2:30pm | Holmen Area Community Center

REGISTER by 9/30: 608-785-5700 or adrc@lacrossecounty.org

AGING WELL EVENT

Thursday October 9

10:00am- 1:30pm

Black River Beach Neighborhood Center

Maintaining Wellness, Supporting Brain Health, and

Navigating the Healthcare System

Dr. Mary Bassing

Complimentary Lunch Provided

Call 608-785-5700

Registration
Required by
10/3

Learn + Connect Class

Designed for individuals living with a diagnosis and their care partners. Each session offers practical guidance for everyday life, tools for planning ahead, and resources to support independence and confidence.

Wednesdays- October 1st, 8th, 15th, 21st
10am – 11:30am



**REGISTER: 608-785-5700 or
adrc@lacrossecounty.org**

CARING BETTER & BRAVER

October 25, 2025 | 10:00am-3:30pm

Health Science Center

1300 Badger St. La Crosse

A day of self-care & learning for family caregivers. No Cost! Lunch Included.

MUST REGISTER 608-785-5700

Rejuvenate & Recharge: Caregiver Retreat

Program offers well-being, self-care, and fun activities that foster new connections amongst caregivers.

Thurs. Nov. 6th | Black River Neighborhood Center

REGISTER: 608-785-5700

DEMENTIA Live®

"Because it's frightening to care for someone you don't understand"

- **Oct. 14, 9:15-10:15am** Black River Beach Neighborhood Center
 - **Nov. 3, 6:00-7:00pm** Holmen Area Community Center *Caregiver ONLY
 - **Nov 4, 10:00-11:00am & 12:15-1:15pm** Eagle Crest N Onalaska, *PLUS Research Education at 11:15am*
 - **Nov 13, 1:00-2:00pm** DASH Center Onalaska *Caregiver ONLY
- *MUST REGISTER: Call 608-785-5700**

TAKING CARE

**Monday
November 17th
2:30 - 4:30 pm**

FREE Event Open to the Public

Complimentary appetizers and refreshments will be served!



With expert insights and touching personal moments, the film is a powerful reminder of the difference we can all make in the effort to end Alzheimer's disease and dementia.



Holmen Area Community Center
600 N. Holmen Drive, Holmen WI
www.holmencc.org 608-399-1870

*Where Our
Community
Gathers!*

**FOR ONGOING
local dementia programs,
resources, support...**

BROWSE: La Crosse County Programs
Guide - <https://tinyurl.com/34yt2wbm>

CALL: Aging & Disability Resource Center of
La Crosse County - 608-785-5700