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PURPLE

SUNDAY

ALZHEIMER'S

AWARENESS

#ENDALZ



PURPLE SUNDAY OBSERVANCE ON NOVEMBER 14th



alzheimer's association®

The Alzheimer's Association is proud to partner with the AMEC to raise awareness of Alzheimer's disease and other dementia among the African American Community. By working together, we can provide opportunities for all those affected to access care and support services, engage in research and advance and advocacy.

Did you know?

- ❖ African Americans are twice as likely to develop Alzheimer's disease as older White Americans. Variations in health, lifestyle, and socioeconomic risk factors likely account for most of the differences in risk of Alzheimer's and other dementia by race.
- ❖ African Americans may be more likely to be diagnosed in the later stages of the disease due to lack of access to insurance and affordable health care –a barrier that has grown as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This delay means these individuals are not getting treatments when they are most likely to improve quality of life, including some symptom relief and help maintaining independence longer.
- ❖ Delayed diagnoses mean older African Americans may miss the opportunity to make important legal, financial and care plans while they are still capable, and may be unable to communicate their preferences to their families.
- ❖ Currently, African American participation in Alzheimer's clinical trials is less than 10%. It's critical to represent the broader population, including African Americans, in clinical trials to better understand how racial and ethnic differences may affect efficacy and safety.

FACTS ABOUT ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE:

- Alzheimer's disease is *not* a normal part of aging – it is a progressive brain disease that causes problems with memory, thinking and behavior. Alzheimer's is the most common cause of dementia, a general term for memory loss and other cognitive abilities serious enough to interfere with daily life.
- Although there is currently no cure for Alzheimer's new treatments are on the horizon as a result of accelerating insight into the biology of the disease.
- More than 6 million American's are living with Alzheimer's disease, and over 11 million serve as unpaid caregivers.
- 1 in 3 seniors dies with Alzheimer's or another dementia. It kills more than breast cancer and prostate cancer combined.
- Almost two-thirds of Americans with Alzheimer's disease are women.

10 WARNING SIGNS:

The following is a list of warning signs to help identify symptoms that may be related to Alzheimer's or another dementia. It's possible to experience one or more of these signs in varying degrees and it's not necessary to experience every sign in order to raise concerns.

1. Memory loss that disrupts daily life.

One of the most common signs of Alzheimer's disease, especially in the early stages, is forgetting recently learned information. Others include forgetting important dates or events, asking the same questions over and over, and increasingly needing to rely on memory aids (e.g. reminder notes or electronic devices) or family members for things they used to handle on their own. **What's a typical age-related change? Sometimes forgetting names of appointments but remembering them later.**

2. Challenges in planning or solving problems.

Some people living with dementia may experience changes in their ability to develop and follow a plan or work with numbers. They may have trouble following a familiar recipe or keeping track of monthly bills. They may have difficulty concentrating and take much longer to do things than they did before. **What's a typical age-related change? Making occasional errors when managing finances or household bills.**

3. Difficulty completing familiar tasks.

People with Alzheimer's often find it hard to complete daily tasks. Sometimes they may have trouble driving to church, organizing a grocery list or remembering the rules of a favorite game. **What's a typical age-related change?** Occasionally needing help to use microwave settings or to record a TV show.

4. Confusion with time or place.

People living with Alzheimer's can lose track of dates, season and the passage of time. They may have trouble understanding something if it is not happening immediately. Sometimes they may forget where they are or how they got there. **What's a typical age-related change?** Getting confused about the day of the week but figuring it out later.

5. Trouble understanding visual images and spatial relationships.

For some people, having vision problems is a sign of Alzheimer's. This may lead to difficulty with balance or trouble reading. They may also have problems judging distance and determining color or contrast, causing issues with driving. **What's a typical age-related change?** Vision changes related to cataracts.

6. New problems with words in speaking or writing.

People living with Alzheimer's may have trouble following or joining a conversation. They may stop in the middle of a conversation and have no idea how to continue or they may repeat themselves. They may struggle with vocabulary, have trouble naming a familiar object or use the wrong name (e.g., calling a "watch" a "hand-clock").

7. Misplacing things and losing the ability to retrace steps.

A person living with Alzheimer's disease may put things in unusual places. They may lose things and be unable to go back over their steps to find them again. He or she may accuse others of stealing, especially as the disease progresses. **What's a typical age-related change?** Misplacing things from time to time and retracing steps to find them.

8. Decreased or poor judgment.

Individuals may experience changes in judgment or decision-making. For example, they may use poor judgment when dealing with money or pay less attention to grooming or keeping themselves clean. **What's a typical age-related change?** Making a bad decision or mistake once in a while, like neglecting to change the oil in the

car.

9. *Withdrawal from work or social activities.* A person living with Alzheimer's disease may experience changes in the ability to hold or follow a conversation. As a result, he or she may withdraw from hobbies, social activities or other engagements. They may have trouble keeping up with regular church services or another favorite activity.

What's a typical age-related change? Sometimes feeling uninterested in family or church obligations.

10. *Changes in mood and personality.* Individuals living with Alzheimer's may experience mood and personality changes. They can become confused, suspicious, depressed, fearful or anxious. They may be easily upset at home, with friends or when out of their comfort zone.

What's a typical age-related change? Developing very specific ways of doing things and becoming irritable when a routine is disrupted.

Diagnosis and Treatment

Multiple conditions can cause cognitive changes, so it's essential to obtain a full medical evaluation to determine whether symptoms are related to Alzheimer's or something else. If the cause is not Alzheimer's or another dementia, it could be a treatable condition. If it is dementia, there are many benefits to receiving an early and accurate diagnosis, including an opportunity to plan for the future, access support services and explore medication that may address some symptoms for a time.

There is no single diagnostic test that can determine if a person has Alzheimer's disease. However, diagnostic tools and criteria make it possible for physicians to make a diagnosis of Alzheimer's with an accuracy of about 90%.

The diagnostic process may involve a thorough medical history, mental status and mood testing, a physical and neurological exam, and tests (such as blood tests and brain imaging) to rule out other causes of dementia-like symptoms. This process may take more than one day or visit.

While there is no cure for Alzheimer's disease or a way to stop or slow its progression, there are drug and non-drug options that may help treat symptoms. Understanding available options can help individuals living with the disease and their caregivers to cope with symptoms and improve quality of life. Visit alz.org for more information on the available treatment.

Care and Support Resources

Here are a few Association resources:

Call the Association's free 24/7 Helpline (800.272.3900) or visit amehealth.org/alz for information about Alzheimer's disease and programs and services — including virtual support groups and education programs.

Opportunities to Get Involved

Big Bethel AME members can make a difference in the fight against Alzheimer's. Here are a few ways to get involved.

- ❖ Join Big Bethel's ministries that are dedicated to outreach and awareness concerning this disease. Contact Rev. Charmain Purvis cpurvis@bigbethelame.org for more details.
- ❖ Volunteer for the Alzheimer's Association by serving as a Faith Outreach Representative. This volunteer role engages locally with key audiences, including personal or neighboring faith communities, to connect people with the Association's care and support resources. Visit alz.org/volunteer to learn more.
- ❖ Advocate for those affected by Alzheimer's and urge legislators to make the disease a national priority. Visit alz.org/advocacy.
- ❖ Participate in or volunteer for one of our fundraising events under the banner of the AME Church teams to raise awareness and funds for Alzheimer's disease care, support and research: Walk to End Alzheimer's® (alz.org/walk) and The Longest Day® (alz.org/thelongestday).
- ❖ Register for Alzheimer's Association TrialMatch® (alz.org/TrialMatch), a free, easy-to-use clinical studies matching service for individuals living with Alzheimer's, caregivers and healthy volunteers that generate customized lists of studies.