

## Early detection matters

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As the facilitator of the Gothenburg Support Group, I am often involved in conversations with individuals who are concerned about themselves or someone they know with regard to signs of memory loss. One of the common questions they ask is: “How do you know if it’s normal memory loss or Alzheimer’s?”

I am quick to point out there is a significant difference between normal aging of the brain and the symptoms of Alzheimer’s or other forms of dementia. Alzheimer’s disease is the public health threat of the 21st century. Today, more than 5 million Americans are living with Alzheimer’s, and millions more serve in the emotionally and financially draining role of the caregiver. In the coming years, this disease will bankrupt families, communities, and our health care system.

Early detection of the disease can help individuals with dementia while science directs us toward treatment, prevention, and ultimately, a cure. The sooner a diagnosis is made, the sooner impactful interventions can begin.

Early detection can happen through knowledge of the 10 Warning Signs. If you or someone you know is experiencing memory loss or behavioral changes, it’s time to learn the facts. On Thursday, Feb. 2, Alexandra Dillon, who is the associate director for the Great Plains Chapter of the Alzheimer’s Association, will present “Know the 10 Signs—Early Detection Matters” at the Gothenburg Senior Center from 6:30 to 7:30 pm. Alexandra will help you distinguish the difference between Alzheimer’s and typical aging; what steps to take if you recognize a warning sign in yourself or someone you know; what is the process in receiving a proper diagnosis; and why early detection is crucial.

The information shared in this presentation is invaluable to the members of our community in helping them gain knowledge of this devastating disease. There continues to be myths and inaccurate information about Alzheimer’s disease that can lead people down the wrong path. The participants of this workshop will walk away armed with knowledge that could help them take steps in the right direction.