

Are You Facing
**MEMORY
LOSS?**

Steps to Take





1. See a your primary doctor (if you haven't already). Your primary care doctor can evaluate you and determine if there are other conditions that may be causing memory loss. Your primary care doctor may also refer you to a specialized memory care clinic which provides expert guidance and treatment and offers social workers and case managers who can help connect you or your loved one to services in the community.

- **RESOURCE:** Getting a Dementia Diagnosis



2. Talk with your doctor about what medications may be helpful to slow the progress of dementia. Although there is no cure, there are drugs that may help prevent future decline and treat other symptoms that may be experienced.

- **RESOURCE:** Medications & Dementia



3. Complete medical Durable Power of Attorney (DPOA) if it has not been done already. A DPOA appoints an individual whom you choose to make medical decisions for you should you become unable to do so. It's important to discuss your care choices and preferences with the person that you select to be your DPOA.

- **RESOURCE:** Advance Care Planning Assistance with Making Choices Michigan



4. Make financial decisions for the future. Compile a list of all pertinent financial information including account numbers, assets, and debt. It's important to also talk to a financial professional who can provide expert guidance and advice. Completing a financial DPOA is also very important as it is different than a medical DPOA.

- **RESOURCE:** The National Institute on Aging Legal and Financial Planning for People with Alzheimer's



5. Manage symptoms of depression or anxiety. if they arise, it's important to be able to recognize the signs and symptoms. These include things like social isolation, sadness, and changes in sleep habits. Talk to your doctor about treatment options available and consider seeing a therapist even if you haven't seen one before.

- **RESOURCE:** Alzheimer's or Depression: Could it be both?



6. Manage other health conditions and get regular screenings for vision and hearing. It is important to ensure that other preventable conditions aren't worsening the effects of dementia.

- **RESOURCE:** Want to Keep Your Brain Sharp? Take Care of Your Eyes and Ears



7. Create a plan on how to live safely in your home when dementia worsens. Modifications can be done to your home to improve your safety and prevent falls and other injuries. Other devices like safety alert necklaces can provide reassurance if you are alone and face an emergency when no one is available to help.

- **RESOURCE:** Alzheimer's Disease: Creating a Safer Living Area



8. Connect with others who have also been diagnosed with dementia. Support groups allow you to meet with others going through the same life experiences which can provide encouragement. Visit the Rethinking Dementia Resource Guide or App for a full listing of programs and support groups in West Michigan.

- **RESOURCE:** Programs for Early Stage Dementia
- **RESOURCE:** West Michigan Support Groups



9. Join a clinical trial. The Michigan State University Alzheimer's Alliance and the National Institute on Aging can help you to search for clinical research and upcoming trials that are currently enrolling for people with Alzheimer's disease or other dementias. Your doctor also can assist you in finding trials that you may qualify to participate in.

- **RESOURCE:** Michigan State University Alzheimer's Alliance
- **RESOURCE:** National Institute on Aging

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Visit rethinkingdementiami.org/facingmemoryloss to view the corresponding resources.



10. Share your diagnosis with others to help reduce the stigma of the disease and to find support from family and friends. The Alzheimer's Association provides some great tips on how to do this such as providing education about the disease and having the conversation privately in a non-stressful environment.

- **RESOURCE:** Sharing Your Diagnosis



11. Continue to live an active lifestyle and continue to do the hobbies and things you enjoy for as long as you are able. This will help to prevent feelings of social isolation. Physical activity helps to promote blood flow to the brain and promotes healthy weight and blood pressure which can also reduce the risk of memory loss.

- **RESOURCE:** 10 Steps for Healthy Aging



12. Reach out to Rethinking Dementia for resources that can make life easier. The Resource Guide offers information about services in West Michigan that may better equip and prepare caregivers and others affected by dementia.

- **RESOURCE:** Rethinking Dementia: Accelerating Change
(616) 247-9630 | contact@rethinkingdementiami.org

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