

Occupational Therapy Toolkit

Alzheimer's Disease

Mild Stage Functional Limitations

DrD Q&E	=	5-8
MMSE	=	21-30
CDR	=	1
GDS	=	3

Functional problems (decreased initiation planning and organization daily activities, difficulty with complex tasks such as financial matters)

Cognitive problems (forgetful, impaired attention span, impaired judgment, confused about time but not about places or persons, misplaces items, forgets appointments, gets lost in familiar area, mild word-finding difficulty, able to learn with repetition)

Behavioral problems (depression and apathy)

Environmental barriers

Occupational Therapy Intervention

ADL, IADL and leisure training including but not limited to...

Treat underlying physical limitations to safety and independence

Label cabinets, drawers and closets so it's easier to find items

Provide written directions for using common household items and appliances

Recommend safety equipment in the bathroom

Driving assessment

Assist in creating a memory scrapbook

Provide graded UB activities and exercises to improve strength and endurance

Train in the use of compensatory strategies for memory and organization

Assess home safety and functional safety and provide environmental modifications and adaptations

Educate patient and caregivers in Alzheimer's disease, the availability of community resources and encourage participation in support groups

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Moderate Stage Functional Limitations

DrD Q&E	=	9-14
MMSE	=	10-20
CDR	=	2
GDS	=	4-5

Functional problems (assistance with self care, unable to perform IADL's due to poor safety judgment, apraxia, agnosia)

Cognitive problems (disoriented, confused, forgets names of close family members, aphasia, anomia, able to recall the past, responds to instructions)

Behavioral problems (lack of insight, wandering especially in the late afternoon or at night, anxiety, physical aggression, psychosis, verbal aggression/disruption, socially inappropriate behavior, resistant to care, hallucinations, suspiciousness or paranoia, irritability, social withdrawal)

Environmental barriers

Caregiver burden

Fall risk

Occupational Therapy Interventions:

ADL, IADL, work and leisure training including but not limited to...

Maximizing function through simplifying the activities, structuring the environment and providing adaptive equipment

Provides graded assistance - verbal cues ("brush teeth"), visual cues (demonstrating brushing teeth or use pictures and lists) and physical cues (put toothbrush in the hand and move the arm)

Assist patient and caregiver in developing a structured schedule of self care, activities and rest

Provide UB therapeutic exercises and activities to maintain ROM, strength and endurance

Assess home safety and functional safety and provide environmental modifications and adaptations to the patient's ability

Educate regarding falls risk and prevention strategies

Educate caregivers in strategies to reduce behavioral disturbances

Educate patient and caregivers in disease process, availability of community resources and encourage participation in support groups

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Severe Stage Functional Limitations

DrD Q&E	=	>14
MMSE	=	<10
CDR	=	3
GDS	=	6-7

Functional problems (dependent, incontinent, bed bound or chair fast, dysphasia)

Cognitive problems (sever impairment of all cognitive functions, no recognition of family members, no verbal ability, non-verbal communication, eye contact, crying, groaning, may respond to sounds, tastes, smells, sights and touch, interprets and uses basic body language)

Behavioral problems (agitation and aggression)

Occupational Therapy Interventions:

Self feeding training with adaptive equipment, hand over hand guiding

Bedside commode transfer training

Instruct caregiver in PROM exercises

Instruct caregiver in proper positioning in bed and chair, when eating

Instruct caregivers in proper lifting and turning patient

Educate patient and caregivers in disease process, availability of community resources and encourage participation in support groups

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Assessments and Scales:

Dr D's Quick and Easy Dementia Screening (DrDQ&E), www.medschool.lsuhs.edu

Mini Mental States Examination (MMSE), www.alzheimers.org.uk

Clinical Dementia Rating Scale (CDR) Washington University School of Medicine, St. Louis, Missouri, www.alzheimer.wustl.edu

Global Deterioration Scale (GDS), www.memorylossonline.com

Patient/Caregiver Education:

1. Memory Compensation Strategies
2. Upper Body Strengthening and Stretching Exercises
3. Upper Body Strengthening Activities
4. Hand Strengthening Exercises
5. Passive ROM and Stretching Exercises
6. Falls Risks Assessment and Prevention Strategies
7. Home Safety and Functional Safety Assessment

Additional Resources:

1. Safe Return Face Sheet, www.alz.org
2. Behaviors - What causes dementia-related behavior like aggression, and how to respond. Booklet from Alzheimer's Association, www.alz.org
3. Personal Care - Assisting the person with dementia with changing daily needs. Booklet from Alzheimer's Association, www.alz.org
4. Activities at Home - Planning the day for the person with dementia. Booklet from Alzheimer's Association, www.alz.org
5. Safety at Home - Adapting the home to support the person with dementia. Booklet from Alzheimer's Association, www.alz.org