

Alzheimer's: The Uncertain Journey: Navigating the Challenges: The Indispensable Guide for Caregivers and Families

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YourMedicalSource (Apr 30, 2024)

(438pp)

979-899019627-8

Alzheimer's: The Uncertain Journey is a thorough, compassionate guide for caretakers who are navigating the contours of Alzheimer's disease.

Health journalist Renée Despres, orthopedic surgeon Guy Slowik, senior housing specialist Candace Greenwood, and geriatric medicine pioneer Bernard Isaacs's compassionate guide *Alzheimer's: The Uncertain Journey* equips caretakers and family members with an understanding of the disease and the tools necessary to respond to its myriad challenges.

With the authors' expertise traversing multiple fields of study related to Alzheimer's, the book includes a scientific explanation of the disease's effects; statistical and demographic analysis showing how Alzheimer's appears in larger numbers among Black people, Latino people, and women; and explanations of how Alzheimer's fits into the broader category of dementia. It also addresses caretakers for those in mental decline, with advice on when and how to restrict driving privileges, supervising relationships between children and those with Alzheimer's, and addressing the emotional toll of witnessing Alzheimer's effects. And it names techniques for communicating with, and maintaining a meaningful relationship with, those with Alzheimer's as their symptoms worsen.

While the bulk of the text is devoted to advice on topics including changing family dynamics, the patient's safety, and the establishment of daily routines, there are also personal reflections from people looking after loved ones with Alzheimer's. For example, while describing the importance of employing a language of caring—that is, responding to the person with Alzheimer's with awareness and acceptance for how they perceive reality—the book recounts an episode in which a caretaker reprimands an older Alzheimer's patient for eating ice cream before dinner. Simple alternatives for building trust and respect are proposed, like accepting the patient's behavior without comment or correction. Such illustrations are insightful.

The book is also embellished by graphic charts, information bubbles, and condensed, bullet-point strategies for breaking poor communication habits and learning to engage with people with Alzheimer's on their own terms. Its prose varies: sometimes it is composed of vulnerable direct addresses; sometimes it is authoritative (in particular when it comes to serious subjects, such as overviews of available medical treatments and gadgets that can mitigate Alzheimer's-related symptoms). Its list of resources and health organizations is also useful.

An encouraging all-in-one caregiver's handbook, *Alzheimer's: The Uncertain Journey* is helpful in addressing the difficult circumstances that may arise in the course of supporting someone with Alzheimer's.

WILLEM MARX (July 10, 2024)

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