

# First Link® Bulletin

Your link to dementia support

October - December 2024



Updates on  
programs and  
services

See inside for dementia programs in  
the South Okanagan and Similkameen

## Discovering meaningful connections through support groups



While the seasons change, our commitment to providing the right support does not. Our support groups, based on information sharing and mutual aid, are designed with the belief that people in similar circumstances can uniquely support one another through the dementia journey.

Dementia – whether you're living with it or caring for someone who is – can be very lonely, as friends and family may not fully grasp your experience. Our support groups create a space where you can connect with others who genuinely understand, ensuring that no one has to navigate this journey alone. These groups provide a sense of belonging and genuine understanding, with friendships that often extend beyond the group and become essential lifelines.

Our support groups are available in person and online. To learn more, visit:  
[alzbc.org/support-groups](http://alzbc.org/support-groups)

## Reach out to candidates and speak up this election

As the provincial election approaches on October 19, we encourage you to advocate for a comprehensive dementia strategy by engaging with candidates in your community.

We're calling on candidates to commit to breaking down the stigma associated with dementia, improving the diagnosis process and ensuring timely access to necessary support. To help you raise your voice, we've created simple tools and resources on our website to help you connect with your local candidates to share your stories and help change changing perceptions about the disease. You can also find a recording of a recent webinar we hosted with former B.C. Minister of Health Terry Lake and our lived experience partners directly affected by the disease to help people become effective advocates.

Join us in making dementia a priority this election. To learn more, visit:

[BCVotesDementia.ca](http://BCVotesDementia.ca)



Alzheimer Society  
BRITISH COLUMBIA

First Link®  
YOUR LINK TO DEMENTIA SUPPORT

BRITISH  
COLUMBIA

Ministry of  
Health

## Learn about dementia and connect with others through dementia education

Our dementia workshops educate and empower people living with dementia and their families and friends.

The online workshops are presented in a limited-sized group and will be facilitated to provide opportunities for live discussion. A range of days and times of day, including evenings, are available. **Pre-registration is required. Please register one week prior to the workshop date.**

### Registration:

**In-person workshops:** Call our First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-800-936-6033. Proof of full vaccination will be optional to attend in-person programs. Free to attend, donations appreciated.

**Online workshops:** Register online by visiting [alzbc.org/edu-workshops](http://alzbc.org/edu-workshops) or call the First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-800-936-6033. You will receive an email with a link to join the event prior to the event date.

## In-person dementia education in the South Okanagan and Similkameen

With increased knowledge surrounding safety measures and high level of vaccinations across B.C., we have updated our safety protocols based on the current recommendations from the B.C. government.

Masks and proof of full vaccination are now optional for attending all in-person programs. To learn more about safety protocols, visit: [alzbc.org/COVID-safety](http://alzbc.org/COVID-safety)

In-person workshops	Date	Location
<b>Family caregiver session</b>   An education workshop for family members who are caring for a person living with dementia that covers understanding dementia, communication and behaviour, as well as planning for the future and self-care for caregivers. Topics include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding dementia (types, causes, progression)</li> <li>• Communication and behaviour (e.g. repetitive questions, confusion)</li> <li>• Planning for the future</li> <li>• Self-care</li> </ul> For caregivers.	Saturday, October 5 9:30 a.m to 3:30 p.m.	<b>Summerland</b> Location details provided upon registration
	Friday, October 18 9 to 3:30 p.m.	<b>Osoyoos</b> Location details provided upon registration
<b>Understanding behaviour changes</b>   Explore various changes in behaviours caused by dementia and learn practical strategies for responding in supportive ways. For caregivers.	Wednesday, November 6 6 to 8 p.m.	<b>Penticton</b> Location details provided upon registration

In-person workshops	Date	Location
<p><b>Coping with change, grief and loss</b>   The dementia experience involves change, loss and uncertainty. Explore coping strategies for managing emotions and overcoming challenges, as well as ways to find meaning in daily life. For caregivers.</p>	<p>Friday, November 15 10 to 11:30 a.m.</p>	<p><b>Penticton</b> Location details provided upon registration</p>
<p><b>Equip yourself: Knowledge and skills to help get the support you need</b>   Gain the skills and knowledge you need to advocate for yourself and your family member along the dementia journey, including responding to common challenges, getting a diagnosis and accessing home support. For caregivers and people living with dementia.</p>	<p>Wednesday, November 20 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.</p>	<p><b>Penticton</b> Location details provided upon registration</p>
<p><b>Preparing for the holidays</b>   The holidays can be a stressful time for anyone – but especially for people on the dementia journey. Explore strategies for adapting your plans and learn tips on minimizing stress and maximizing connection with meaningful activities. For caregivers and people living with dementia.</p>	<p>Friday, November 29 10 to 11:30 a.m.</p>	<p><b>Penticton</b> Location details provided upon registration</p>
<p><b>Creating a safe home environment: Identifying and minimizing risks</b>   Learn to identify safety risks in the home and make adaptations to prevent accidents. Topics include safety measures for medications, food, hazardous substances and more. For caregivers and people living with dementia.</p>	<p>Monday, December 2 2 to 3 p.m.</p>	<p><b>Penticton</b> Location details provided upon registration</p>

**To register, call the First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-800-936-6033**

## Online workshops

All sessions are hosted on Zoom. If you are new to using Zoom and would like a chance to practice connecting to a meeting before the session, please call our First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-800-936-6033 or email [info.helpline@alzbc.org](mailto:info.helpline@alzbc.org).

Please note these sessions are not recorded – only register if you plan to attend live. Register at [alzbc.org/edu-workshops](http://alzbc.org/edu-workshops) or call 1-800-936-6033.

Online workshops	Date
<p><b>Considering the transition to long-term care</b>   Learn about the options for accessing long-term care, including eligibility requirements. We will also discuss factors to consider when planning a move and provide tips for easing the transition. For caregivers.</p>	<p>Thursday, October 17 6:30 to 8 p.m.</p>
<p><b>From home to care home: Preparing and adjusting to the new environment</b>   Making a transition into long-term care can be challenging for both the person living with dementia and the caregiver. Discuss strategies for minimizing the challenges, including how to prepare for the move and respond to common issues. For caregivers.</p>	<p>Tuesday, October 29 6:30 to 8 p.m.</p>
<p><b>Creating a safe home environment: Identifying and minimizing risks</b>   Learn to identify safety risks in the home and make adaptations to prevent accidents. Topics include safety measures for medications, food, hazardous substances and more. For caregivers and people living with dementia.</p>	<p>Thursday, November 14 10 to 11:30 a.m.</p>
<p><b>Personal care: Bathing and hygiene</b>   Bathing is often a highly private, personal activity and people living with dementia may need help when they're feeling vulnerable. Learn about common hygiene challenges and effective strategies to maintain a successful routine. For caregivers.</p>	<p>Thursday, November 28 3 to 4:30 p.m.</p>
<p><b>What is dementia?</b>   Learn how dementia affects an individual's brain and behaviour. General topics include different types of dementia, stages and progression and dispelling some common myths. For caregivers and people living with dementia.</p>	<p>Tuesday, December 10 10 to 11:30 a.m.</p>

Register at [alzbc.org/edu-workshops](http://alzbc.org/edu-workshops) or call 1-800-936-6033

## Learn about dementia from anywhere in our live weekly webinars

Learn strategies for living well with dementia at our free webinars offered each Wednesday, typically at 2 p.m. Our trained presenters share tips and strategies in a lecture-style format. All you need is a computer, tablet or phone to participate and connect with others on the dementia journey.

All sessions are hosted on Zoom. To register for our upcoming webinars, visit our website at [alzbc.org/webinars](http://alzbc.org/webinars). You can watch the education content on-demand at [alzbc.org/ondemand](http://alzbc.org/ondemand).



Webinar	Date
<p><b>Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) and dementia: Unraveling the myths from the facts with Dr. Stefanie Green</b>   Explore the facts, the complexities and the misconceptions surrounding Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD) for people living with dementia with Dr. Stefanie Green, a leading MAiD practitioner and best-selling author. Dr. Green will provide an overview of MAiD and lead an in-depth discussion on MAiD in B.C., which will include potential eligibility and access for people diagnosed with dementia and will answer commonly asked questions. For caregivers and people living with dementia.</p>	<p>Wednesday, October 2 2 to 3:30 p.m.</p>
<p><b>Preparing for end-of-life on the dementia journey</b>   Learn what to expect when transitioning from advanced dementia to end-of-life. We will explore the physiological signs of dying, key decisions to be made, ways to discuss end-of-life wishes in advance and strategies to maintain connection throughout the end of the dementia journey. For caregivers.</p>	<p>Wednesday, October 9 2 to 3:30 p.m.</p>
<p><b>Supporting end-of-life: Considering an end-of-life doula</b>   Join Laurie DeCroos to hear her personal experience as an end-of-life doula and learn how end-of-life doulas support people living with dementia and their families with compassionate and unbiased care. We'll walk through how to access this support service as well as discuss the role of end-of-life doulas, from facilitating family conversations to assisting in planning for after-life care For caregivers and people living with dementia.</p>	<p>Wednesday, October 16 2 to 3:30 p.m.</p>
<p><b>Lived experience: Living with purpose post-diagnosis</b>   In this empowering webinar, lived experience partners will share how they've found purpose and fulfilment after receiving a dementia diagnosis. Learn how people living with dementia have navigated the complexities of the disease and overcome feelings of grief and loss to find a renewed sense of purpose. Whether you are a person living with dementia, a caregiver, family member or friend, this webinar will provide valuable insights and strength to move forward on the dementia journey with hope. For caregivers and people living with dementia.</p>	<p>Wednesday, October 30 2 to 3:30 p.m.</p>

Webinar	Date
<p><b>Getting your affairs in order: Health-care, legal and financial planning</b>   Early in the dementia journey it can feel daunting to think about what lies ahead – but it’s important to plan now, before communication and decision-making become more challenging. Learn how to begin planning early for important legal, health-care and financial decisions. For caregivers and people living with dementia.</p>	<p>Wednesday, November 6 2 to 3:30 p.m.</p>
<p><b>British Columbia Law Institute and Canadian Centre for Elder Law: Dementia and decision-making</b>   Early in the dementia journey it can feel daunting to think about what lies ahead – but it’s important to plan now, before communication and decision-making become more challenging. Learn how to begin planning early for important legal, health-care and financial decisions. For caregivers and people living with dementia.</p>	<p>Wednesday, November 13 2 to 3 p.m.</p>
<p><b>Adjusting our sails: Mindfulness as a strategy for living well with dementia</b>   Just as we have no control over the wind, we have no control over the unfolding of cognitive change, which can blow in like a harsh wind and toss us around like a ship at sea. Join Dr. Liz Drance as she guides you through using mindfulness practices that can support your ship when the stormy weather of cognitive change hits! For caregivers and people living with dementia.</p>	<p>Wednesday, November 20 2 to 3:30 p.m.</p>
<p><b>Research connects: Topic TBA</b>   Join us as we explore various topics related to dementia research. In order to be as responsive as possible to the latest news in dementia research, the specific topic will be announced closer to the date. For the general public.</p>	<p>Wednesday, November 27 2 to 3:30 p.m.</p>
<p><b>Preparing for the holidays</b>   The holidays can be a stressful time for anyone – but especially for people on the dementia journey. Explore strategies for adapting your plans and learn tips on minimizing stress and maximizing connection with meaningful activities. For caregivers and people living with dementia.</p>	<p>Wednesday, December 4 2 to 3:30 p.m.</p>


**Register online at [alzbc.org/webinars](http://alzbc.org/webinars)**

Webinar	Date
<p><b>Lived experience: Practical tips for living well with memory loss</b>   In this webinar, lived experience partners will share personal stories, practical strategies and valuable insights to help people affected by dementia learn more about dementia-related memory loss and adapt their home environments to be dementia-inclusive. Gain a deeper understanding of dementia-related memory loss and find inspiration from others walking the dementia journey. For caregivers and people living with dementia.</p>	<p>Wednesday, December 11 2 to 3:30 p.m.</p>

[Register online at alzbc.org/webinars](https://alzbc.org/webinars)

## Minds in Motion®

A fitness and social program for people living with early-stage dementia.

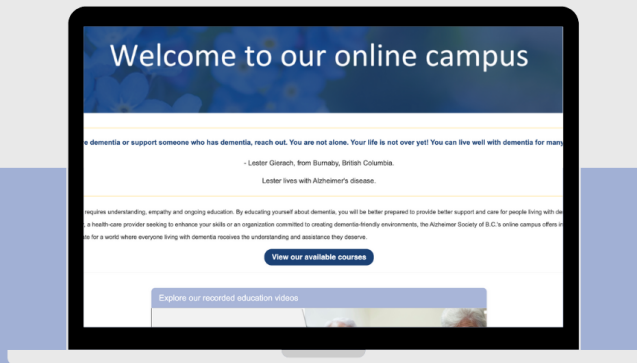


Minds in Motion®	Date	Registration
<p><b>Osoyoos</b> Desert Sun Counselling and Resource Centre 8701 Main Street</p>	<p>Eight Wednesdays, September 4 – October 23 1 to 3 p.m.</p>	<p>Please call the First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-800-936-6033 to register.</p> <p>Cost: no cost</p>
	<p>Seven Wednesdays, November 6 – December 18 1 to 3 p.m.</p>	
<p><b>Online (English)</b>  Hosted online via Zoom</p>	<p>Groups meet weekly:  Tuesdays: 1 to 2:30 p.m. Thursdays: 1 to 2:30 p.m. Fridays: 10 to 11:30 a.m.</p>	<p>Groups are free to attend. For more information and to register, please call the First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-800-936-6033 or visit <a href="https://alzbc.org/mm">alzbc.org/mm</a>.</p>

# Our online campus is live!

Learn about dementia from anywhere at any time, because we know caregiving doesn't happen on a schedule.

Visit [alzbc.org/onlinecampus](https://alzbc.org/onlinecampus)



[alzbc.org/FLDHL](https://alzbc.org/FLDHL)

## First Link® Dementia Helpline

**English** 1-800-936-6033  
(9 a.m. to 8 p.m.)

**Cantonese and Mandarin** 1-833-674-5007  
(9 a.m. to 4 p.m.)

**Punjabi, Hindi and Urdu** 1-833-674-5003  
(9 a.m. to 4 p.m.)



## Connect with others on the dementia journey through our support groups

If you are affected by dementia, you are not alone. There are others to share the journey with you. We currently offer regional support groups in-person and provincial support groups virtually for caregivers and people living in the early stages of dementia.

**Please note:** Due to the high level of interest in our support groups for people living with dementia and for caregivers, we are only listing groups with space for new members. If you're interested in joining a support group but do not see one for your area, please call the First Link® Dementia Helpline and we will add you to an interest list.

### To register:

- For groups in Cantonese and Mandarin, call the Chinese First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-833-674-5007.
- For groups in Punjabi and Hindi, call the South Asian First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-833-674-5003.
- For all other groups, call the First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-800-936-6033.

*Please note that the schedule is subject to change due to holidays or other conflicts. You will be notified by your facilitator upon registration.*

### In-person caregiver support groups

Support group	Date
<p><b>South Okanagan and Similkameen</b> Open to anyone in the South Okanagan and Similkameen who is currently caring for a person living with dementia.</p> <p>Our family caregiver support groups offer a safe place to learn about dementia and community resources. Connect with others on the dementia journey.</p>	<p><b>Penticton</b> 1st Monday of the month, 7 to 8:30 p.m.</p> <p><b>Princeton</b> 1st Thursday of the month, 10 to 11:30 a.m.</p> <p><b>Summerland</b> 4th Tuesday of the month, 6:30 to 8 p.m.</p> <p><b>Osoyoos</b> 2nd Tuesday of the month, 1 to 2:30 p.m.</p>

### Early-stage support group

<p>Open to people living with early symptoms of dementia to discuss the impact of the disease, share stories, experiences and learn from one another about how to live well with dementia.</p>	<p><b>Penticton</b> 2nd Wednesday of the month, 2 to 3:30 p.m.</p>
--	--

**Register by calling the First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-800-936-6033 (English), 1-833-674-5007 (Cantonese or Mandarin) or 1-833-674-5003 (Punjabi or Hindi)**

## Virtual specialized support groups

Support group	Date
<p><b>General support group</b> Open to anyone in B.C. who is currently caring for a person living with dementia.</p>	<p>2nd Monday of the month, 7 to 8:30 p.m. 1st Tuesday of the month, 7 to 8:30 p.m. 2nd Friday of the month, 10 to 11:30 a.m. 3rd Thursday of the month, 2 to 3:30 p.m.</p>
<p><b>General support group (Punjabi/Hindi)</b> Open to anyone in B.C. who speaks Punjabi or Hindi and is currently caring for a person living with dementia.</p>	<p>For more information, call the South Asian First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-833-674-5003.</p>
<p><b>General support group (Mandarin)</b> Open to anyone in B.C. who speaks Mandarin and is currently caring for a person living with dementia.</p>	<p>For more information, call the South Asian First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-833-674-5003.</p>

## Virtual specialized support groups


<p><b>Adult children support group</b> Open to caregivers anywhere in B.C. who are caring for a parent living with dementia.</p>	<p>3rd Tuesday of the month, 7 to 8:30 p.m. 4th Tuesday of the month, 7 to 8:30 p.m. 2nd Wednesday of the month, 7 to 8:30 p.m.</p>
<p><b>Young onset support group</b> Open to caregivers anywhere in B.C. who are caring for a person living with dementia who was diagnosed before the age of 65.</p>	<p>For more information, please call the First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-800-936-6033.</p>
<p><b>Long-term care support group</b> Open to caregivers anywhere in B.C. who are caring for a person living with dementia in a long-term care home.</p>	<p>3rd Tuesday of the month, 10 to 11:30 a.m.</p>
<p><b>Lewy body dementia support group</b> Open to caregivers anywhere in B.C. who are caring for a person living with Lewy body dementia.</p>	<p>For more information, please call the First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-800-936-6033.</p>

Support group	Date
<p><b>2SLGBTQIA+ support group</b> Are you a caregiver who is part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community caring for someone living with dementia who is?</p>	1st Wednesday of the month, 7 to 8:30 p.m.
<p><b>Early stage support group</b> Open to people living with early symptoms of dementia to discuss the impact of the disease, share stories, experiences and learn from one another about how to live well with dementia.</p>	For more information, please call the First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-800-936-6033.
<p><b>BvFTD support group</b> Open to caregivers anywhere in B.C. who are caring for someone with behavioural variant frontotemporal dementia.</p>	For more information, please call the First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-800-936-6033.

**Register by calling the First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-800-936-6033 (English), 1-833-674-5007 (Cantonese or Mandarin) or 1-833-674-5003 (Punjabi or Hindi).**

**Coffee and chat**  
A social program designed to help you meet new people, engage in social activities and have fun!

To learn more visit [alzbc.org/coffee-chat](http://alzbc.org/coffee-chat)



Coffee and chat	Date	Registration
Online	Every second Thursday, 11 a.m. to noon	Please call the First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-800-936-6033.

**For more information, please call the First Link® Dementia Helpline at 1-800-936-6033**