

This is a monthly diary giving updates on activities at Graceful Living and providing information on ageing 'gracefully' to help elders live a life with maximum ease



GRACEFUL LIVING

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DID YOUR DAD JUST FORGET OR IS IT A SIGN OF SOMETHING MORE SERIOUS?

Older people often worry about 'senior moments' but while that is a normal part of ageing, it can sometimes point to cognitive impairment. Here is how to tell the difference

Forgot your keys in the car? Can't remember the name of your favourite niece? Missed a scheduled lunch date with a longtime friend? Before you start panicking that this brain fog would eventually go down the dreaded dementia road, take a deep breath. Forgetfulness is perhaps the most natural part of ageing, and doctors say not all memory loss ends up as dementia.

According to the Alzheimer Society of Canada, almost 40% of us will experience some form of memory loss after we turn 65. "But chances are still unlikely that we have dementia. For the most part, our memory loss is mild enough to live our daily lives without interruption," it says.

The World Health Organization says only 5–8% of people aged 60 and above will live with dementia. However, incidence increases with age — about 5% of those aged 71 to 79 have dementia, and about 37% of those around 90 live with it.

But how do you know if it's just age catching up with you or a deeper neurological malaise? If forgetfulness disrupts daily routine, comes in the way of finishing familiar tasks, and makes loved ones sit up and take notice, those are warning signs. With age, there's a natural decline in attention span, multitasking ability, and recall of information stored in the brain. "This decline does not compromise autonomy," says Dr. Anu Gupta, associate professor of neurology at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi.



But in dementia, this impairment is more pronounced than what is expected for one's age and education, and it begins to affect a person's functionality. For instance, forgetting why you came into a room is normal — but if the room itself feels unfamiliar, then that could be a sign. Dementia, she says, can be due to many causes, but the most common in India are Alzheimer's disease and vascular disease of the brain. "Hence, physicians take note of a patient's history, carry out cognitive tests, compare results to age- and education-based norms, look at functionality, and only then make a clinical diagnosis of dementia," she adds.

Multitasking Hurts Memory

Charan Ranganath, psychology professor at the University of California, Davis, says the biggest reason for forgetfulness in our everyday life is multitasking. "We're checking our phones, being distracted by noises on the street... these really degrade our capability to remember. And when under stress, we often have trouble forming new memories," he told the *South China Morning Post*.

Personality Change a Sign

But dementia is a completely different ball game, changing one's personality in unexpected ways. Dr. Gupta recalls a case where a 52-year-old man was brought to her by his family after a significant decline in health and demeanour. The patient was a psychology graduate who used to work at a university, run a social organization, and even manage a grocery shop part-time. But after a business debacle five or six years ago, he stopped doing all of that. He gradually lost interest in his favorite hobbies and avoided relatives at family functions by

pretending to have a headache.

Initially, his family thought this was due to stress and loss in business, till he started losing words. He would keep asking what he was supposed to do, despite repeated answers. Within a year or two, he completely lost his memory, speech, and understanding. "Families don't even realize the memory loss is serious," she adds. Dr. Gupta says she has seen similar cases where family members have attributed forgetfulness and behavioral changes to ageing, stress, and retirement, failing to recognize it could be the onset of dementia until it's too late."

Blood Tests May Be The Future

What makes it even more tricky is that there is no single test to diagnose people living with dementia. "We mostly diagnose patients on the basis of clinical exams. If their forgetfulness progresses and impairs daily activities, and the person is found negative for other common treatable causes such as vitamin B12 deficiency and thyroid dysfunction, we consider them for dementia," says Dr. Kaineshwar Prasad, head of neurology at Fortis Hospital, Vasant Kunj.

In the case of Alzheimer's disease, there's high deposition of a protein called amyloid in the brain, he says, adding, "Developed countries like the US and UK can use PET scans to detect the protein. But currently, this test is not available in India as it requires high-tech labs. Some blood-based biomarkers have also been identified to diagnose Alzheimer's, but they are still at the early developmental stage."



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AGEING AND ITS CHALLENGES

Ageing often brings challenges such as loneliness, depression, anxiety, grief, and the loss of purpose. A seasoned psychotherapist and the founder of MyMindCare, Dr. Mamta Wagle Kakade has dedicated her career to supporting individuals across various age groups

Throughout her professional journey, Dr. Kakade has served in diverse roles including school psychologist, corporate counsellor, and specialist in online counselling for adults and senior citizens. Her compassionate and evidence-based approach have made her a respected figure in the field of mental health.

A key area of her work is geriatric counselling, which focuses on addressing the unique emotional and psychological needs of senior citizens. Ageing often brings challenges such as loneliness, depression, anxiety, grief, and the loss of purpose. Dr. Kakade uses therapeutic approaches like cognitive behavioural therapy, talk therapy, and psychodynamic therapy to help seniors cope with these issues and improve their emotional well-being.

The importance of senior citizen counselling is particularly pressing in India, where the elderly population is projected to reach 319 million by 2050. As joint family structures give way to nuclear families and younger generations migrate for work, many



seniors face isolation and emotional neglect. Counselling helps them find support, process life transitions, and build resilience.

Through MyMindCare, Dr. Kakade provides accessible online counselling tailored to the needs of older adults. This service eliminates barriers such as mobility limitations and stigma, making mental health care more reachable.

In addition to therapy, she advocates for emotional support systems, social engagement through intergenerational programs, and increased mental health awareness.

Dr. Kakade also emphasizes the importance of addressing financial insecurity and healthcare access for the elderly. Her holistic approach integrates emotional, social, and practical support to help seniors lead fulfilling lives.

MyMindCare reflects Dr. Kakade's mission to improve the quality of life for the elderly by providing personalized care, raising awareness, and promoting mental well-being. Her work continues to make a meaningful impact on the lives of seniors across India.



Dr. Mamta Wagle Kakade

Dr. Mamta Wagle Kakade has a Ph.D. in Psychotherapy and Counselling, along with advanced certifications in School Psychology and Special Education. She has dedicated her career to supporting individuals across various age groups.

THE JOY OF PLAY: INDOOR AND OUTDOOR GAMES ENRICH THE LIVES OF SENIORS

As people age, staying physically and mentally active becomes crucial to maintain overall well-being. For senior citizens in India, engaging in both indoor and outdoor games can have profound benefits. These activities help enhance physical fitness, improve cognitive function, encourage social interaction, and uplift emotional health.

Indoor games offer a great way for seniors to keep their minds sharp, relieve stress, and bond with others. Whether played alone or with family members, these games contribute significantly to mental agility and emotional satisfaction. Playing indoor games is an excellent way for seniors to enhance the memory, attention span, and problem-solving skills. Some of the most popular indoor games that improve cognitive function and encourage social bonding include traditional board games, video games, and card games. Board games have always been a favourite pastime for people of all ages. For seniors, they provide an opportunity to engage in friendly competition while strengthening their cognitive abilities. Some of the most popular board games among seniors include Scrabble, which enhances

vocabulary and spelling skills; Monopoly, which encourages strategic thinking and money management; Ludo, a simple yet entertaining game that improves patience and focus; Chess, which develops logical thinking and problem-solving abilities; and Snakes & Ladders, a fun game that enhances concentration. In addition to board games, even card games like Rummy, Bridge, and Solitaire keep the brain engaged while fostering social interaction. These games require focus, memory, and analytical skills, making them a great exercise for the brain.

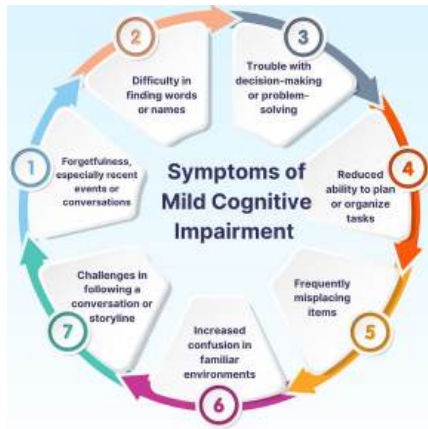
Outdoor games keep seniors physically fit and provide them with a chance to enjoy fresh air and social interaction. It boosts the mood, reduces stress, and helps maintain a healthy lifestyle. Outdoor games keep seniors active and happy. These include walking and maybe jogging, which are excellent low-impact exercises that promote cardiovascular health and mental relaxation which helps in maintaining arm strength and enhances hand-eye coordination; Walking, a simple yet effective way to improve stamina and mobility and more.

Graceful Living is committed to ensuring that the elderly remain physically and mentally fit. Activities are organised that cater to their overall well-being. Some of the key initiatives include Brain Gym Exercises, which are designed to improve memory, concentration, and cognitive function; Cardio Melon workouts combine physical and cognitive exercises all into one fun workout; and regular game sessions such as puzzle-solving sessions, and interactive video gaming activities to keep seniors engaged.

Engaging in both indoor and outdoor games is a fantastic way for senior citizens to maintain an active lifestyle. Whether it's playing a strategic board game, enjoying a walk, or participating in a friendly competition in nature, these activities bring immense joy and numerous health benefits. By incorporating a variety of games and exercises into one's daily routine, people remain mentally sharp, socially connected, and physically fit.



Tanvi Jadhav
Project Officer
Graceful Living



According to sources, AIIMS Delhi is planning a project to validate the benefits of such a test.

Between natural ageing and dementia, there's another stage known as Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI), says Dr. Gupta. "At this stage, the person is able to function independently but needs

effort. All patients with MCI do not progress to dementia," she adds.

Treatment Options

Despite evidence to classify different types of dementia, there's a huge gap in treatment options, says Dr. Shainsher Dwivedee, a senior neurologist at Max Healthcare.

"We have therapeutic agents to slow down the progression of Alzheimer's — the most common cause of dementia — if diagnosed early.

"We advise lifestyle changes and cognitive behavioural therapy, also referred to as brain exercise, to manage the condition. It's labour-intensive and expensive, since there are very few trained cognitive behavioural therapists available in the country," he adds.

What Can We Do to Prevent It?

The bane for dementia is advancing age, which we cannot change. But studies have shown other risk factors that could

be eliminated to reduce half of the dementia cases worldwide. The Lancet Commission recommends providing kids with quality education and being cognitively active in midlife, reducing harmful noise exposure, treating high LDL (bad cholesterol) and a depression, improving social connectedness, and smoking bans, among others.

According to Gill Livingston, professor at University College London and lead author of the Lancet Commission, a healthy lifestyle with regular exercise, not smoking, and avoiding excess alcohol can not only lower dementia risk but may also push back dementia onset. "So, if people do develop dementia, they are likely to live fewer years with it. This has huge quality-of-life implications for individuals as well as cost-saving benefits for societies," he says.

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Courtesy: *The Times of India*, Mumbai, April 16, 2025

RECENT ACTIVITIES OF GRACEFUL LIVING

PHYSICAL MEETINGS

- 14th May 2025 | Adhar Old Age Home, Borivali, Interactive activity session led by Ms. Dipshikha Bose (TISS Intern). This was for 24 seniors, on promoting motor skills, teamwork, and social bonding. Seniors requested more such joyful sessions.
- 16th May 2025 | Dignity Foundation, Vashi. A session on 'Conscious Ageing' with an activity called 'Magic of Memories'; 10 seniors shared personal stories, building emotional connection and reflection.
- 23rd May 2025 | Dignity Foundation, Jogeshwari, conducted a thought-provoking



session on 'Ethical Wills', encouraging 44 seniors to share values and life principles for future generations. Included themed games; highly appreciated by participants.

- 31st May 2025 | Jaslok Hospital Nutrition session by Ms. Rashi Upadhyay on healthy food habits in old age. This was followed by 'Swadbhare Sawaal' food quiz and 'Identify the Spice' activity by Ms. Dipshikha Bose. Seniors participated enthusiastically.

ONLINE WEBINAR

- 23rd May 2025 | 'Is Physiotherapy Just Exercise or Something More?' Webinar by Dr. Pratha Mehta and Dr. Alfiya Shaikh busting myths and highlighting the holistic benefits of physiotherapy; 20 participants attended. Moderated by Ms. Tanvi Jadhav.

VOLUNTEER TRAINING PROGRAM

- 7th May 2025 | MMP Shah College Auditorium. A volunteer orientation program was held for 24 senior citizens and 10 seniors showed interest in associating with Graceful Living. Nine of these volunteers visited our office (GL) at Nariman Point and were interactive with the staff and were informed about GL. These volunteers expressed interest in joining the 'Seniors with Expertise' group and theme-based activity groups.

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AGEING WITH DIGNITY AND GRACE

Tulsi Trust was established by the Chanrai family in 1975 with an aim to fulfil basic needs of the poor and needy. At a deeper level, it's more than indulging in physical activities. Health care, skills development and education are top priorities. It envisages a fair world for all, working with partners to improve health care and opportunities for livelihood, & education. Add to this, the capacity to understand another's needs and do this with utmost integrity.

Graceful Living (GL) is an arm of Tulsi Trust which came out of a realization of a social need for elderly care. After three active years, GL is now a recognized organization for those in their twilight years and has created an awareness through its activities and talks for senior citizens. GL has a social presence viz. Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.

SERVICES PROVIDED BY GRACEFUL LIVING

COUNSELLING & MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

- Mpower
- Dr. Mamta Kakade
- Echoing Healthy Ageing

COMPANIONSHIP SERVICES

- MayaCare Foundation

PHYSIOTHERAPY

- Praj- The Rehab Centre
- Dr. Pooja Gindra
- Dr. Alfiya Shaikh

TECHNOLOGY TRAINING

- Simpli5 - Mr. Salil Datar
- Mrs. Mansi Golwalkar
- Ms. Sakshi Kadam

ELDER COMPANIONSHIP COURSE AT MMP SHAH COLLEGE

YOUTH SENSITIZATION PROGRAMS & INTER-GENERATIONAL ACTIVITIES.

SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS

- Conducted by Senior Citizens' Volunteers trained by Graceful Living

DIRECT INTERVENTION BY GL...

- Webinars – alternate month
- Guest Lectures by professionals/experts – mainly on Zoom
- Graceful Living Monthly Newsletter carrying important information for the elderly plus articles by known doctors and other professionals
- Co-ordination by GL to create platforms for senior citizen organizations in the city



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STAY HEALTHY THIS MONSOON... ESSENTIAL TIPS FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

The monsoon season brings much-needed relief from the scorching summer heat, transforming the landscape into a lush, green paradise. However, for senior citizens, the rainy season also brings certain health challenges. In India, where the monsoon is eagerly anticipated, it is crucial for seniors to take extra care of their health during this time. Here are some essential health tips to ensure a safe and enjoyable monsoon season.

1. Maintain Hygiene and Cleanliness
2. Boost Immunity with a Balanced Diet
3. Wear Appropriate Clothing
4. Take Precautions Against Mosquitoes
5. Stay Active Indoors
6. Monitor Health Regularly
7. Stay Informed About Weather Conditions
8. Maintain Mental Well-Being

Courtesy: 2nd Innings – The Retirement Resort

VIEWPOINT

Finally in the thick of the monsoons, thank God! July brings a very interesting article on forgetfulness in old age. How much of it is normal and how much more means major problems ahead. The article was published by Durgesh Nandan Jha @timesofindia.com, *The Times of India*, Mumbai, April 16, 2025. How do you know if it's just age catching up with you or a deeper neurological malaise? If forgetfulness disrupts daily routine, comes in the way of finishing familiar tasks, and makes loved ones sit up and take notice, those are warning signs, so say the experts. This interesting article tells you how multi-tasking hurts the memory, and if there is a personality change, it is a warning sign. The article takes you through various facets which include blood tests and treatment options.

Page 2 has an article by Dr. Mamta Wagle Kakade who has a Ph.D. in Psychotherapy and Counselling. She mentions that her mission is to improve the quality of life for the elderly by providing personalized care, raising awareness, and promoting mental well-being. Our inhouse Tanvi Jadhav, has written on *The Joy of Play: Indoor and Outdoor Games Enrich the Lives of Seniors*. This includes your simple daily walk; a way to effectively improve stamina. Outdoor games are mentioned to keep seniors active and happy. Plus, indoor activities should include board games among seniors such as Scrabble, Monopoly, Chess, all enhancing concentration and strategic thinking.

Page 3 carries the recent activities of Graceful Living and also information on our forthcoming events, with confirmation of dates and time on your Whatsapp numbers to follow. At the bottom of this page we have made an announcement for subscription of our monthly Newsletter plus our anniversary issue... so in all 12 issues posted to you every month (To hold in your hands and read) at an annual rate of Rs. 250. Details of mode of payment are also mentioned. Do think about it.

And more: I was in Delhi recently and believe it or not, soaring temperatures reaching 45 degrees. Mumbai has never yet gone that high. But despite the high temperatures, one could walk 15,000 steps a day. Strange, that too with the sun shining above. How come? Its dry weather and you don't sweat. And you don't get easily tired. The good and the bad of it all!

Asha Gurnani Vohra
Editor