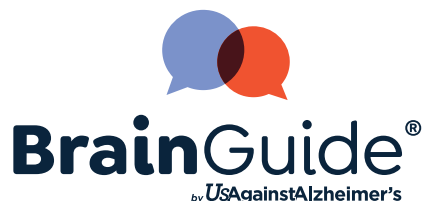


Brain Health in a Box:

Working Together
in Faith and Action



ALTERTM
INSPIRING AND EQUIPPING FAITH COMMUNITIES

Welcome, Faith Leaders!

As a faith leader, you are often the first person community members turn to for support and guidance. Your faith community counts on leaders like you to help them navigate difficult and unknown situations like the loss of a loved one or illness. Because of the important support you provide, the faith community can be a source of education and information around health topics such as Alzheimer's disease, dementia and overall brain health. And who knows, your likely aging faith community could already be facing challenges and stress around experiencing memory issues or caring for a loved one with Alzheimer's, and navigating them silently. You have the power to reach, inspire and motivate your community to take steps to protect their brain health.

Too often, brain health is a topic surrounded by fear and uncertainty, but it doesn't have to be. Many are not aware of the steps that can be taken to keep our brains healthy. The science behind brain health is new, yet we are learning more and more that what is good for the heart is good for the brain! Your role in promoting awareness about brain health and what people can do will be empowering. Faith communities can be leaders in reducing stigma and educating the community about dementia, brain health and research.

UsAgainstAlzheimer's (UsA2) is an advocacy organization working for people with dementia, caregivers and care partners. UsA2 has partnered with the Alter Program to bring you **Brain Health in A Box**. Brain Health in a Box is your 1-stop shop for reliable information, resources and tools for the community you serve.

Please join us in spreading the word around the importance of brain health, for all communities. For further questions, collaboration inquiries, or shipment requests, please email info@mybrainguide.org.

In This Box, You Can Find:

Resources for Faith Leaders: This set of resources is designed to help you learn more about brain health and Alzheimer's disease and dementia along with materials and videos that you can share with your faith community:

- **Fact sheets:** Several fact sheets that share the latest data around the impact of Alzheimer's disease, as well as steps to create dementia-friendly faith communities.
- **Key messages:** Talking points about brain health and BrainGuide®.
- **FAQ:** Frequently asked questions about BrainGuide.
- **Sample presentation:** (Saved on the flash drive). A short PowerPoint presentation and script that can be introduced during meetings with the community or even shared from the pulpit in a sermon.
- **Sample paragraph for website or bulletin:** Brief message for quick and easy posting throughout your faith community's additional information hubs.
- **Videos:** Informational videos that can be shared in your place of worship or during community meetings. The videos range from 50 seconds to 1 minute and 10 seconds. Available both on YouTube and for free download on Dropbox.
- **Reading list:** Some of our favorite, informative books about dementia in faith communities available for purchase.

Information for Your Faith Community:

- **Brain health fact sheet:** This includes eight tips for keeping your brain healthy
- **More ways to take action:** UsA2 has a variety of additional free, helpful resources beyond this toolkit for you and your community members to keep the momentum going.
- **Postcards:** Handouts that describe BrainGuide and provide a QR code for people to get started.
- **Flyers:** Easy to display on bulletin boards or in your welcome center
- **Fun, branded brain health gifts:**
 - Fans
 - Bookmarks
 - Buttons

Dementia, Alzheimer's, and Brain Health: What you need to know

Facts

When it comes to educating your faith community on brain health, it's important to start by familiarizing yourself with the basics. This fact sheet lists important, general information around Alzheimer's, brain health equity and more. Feel free to photocopy this page and share it with your community.

What is brain health?

Brain health is about caring for your brain by taking steps to reduce the risk of cognitive decline as you age. There is strong evidence that you can protect your brain health by making key lifestyle changes, such as getting regular exercise, engaging with other people, keeping your heart healthy and asking your doctor for regular brain health check-ups.

Why is it important to protect my brain health?

A healthy brain is important for your well-being, your memory and your life. We all need to treat our brains as vital organs and pay attention to our brain health. This means taking simple, everyday steps to protect your brain, getting regular brain health check-ups, and talking to your doctor if you notice memory changes.

What is dementia?

Dementia is the umbrella term for loss of memory, thinking and reasoning — to a point where it interferes with a person's daily life and activities. It includes several conditions. Dementia is more common as people grow older, but is not a normal part of aging.

What is mild cognitive impairment (MCI)?

Mild cognitive impairment, also known as MCI, is the stage between the natural cognitive decline as a result of aging and the more serious decline associated with dementia. Mild cognitive impairment is often identified by problems related to memory, language, thinking or judgment. ([Mayo Clinic](#))

What is Alzheimer's disease?

Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia, a brain disease that slowly destroys memories and thinking skills. Alzheimer's can start 5, 10, or even 20 years before symptoms appear. Symptoms usually begin with difficulty remembering new information. In advanced stages, symptoms include confusion, mood and behavior changes and inability to care for oneself and perform basic life tasks.

Figures

- There are **6.2 million** people in the United States living with Alzheimer's disease.
- Currently, **more than 60%** of Alzheimer's cases in people aged 65+ go unrecognized.
- **2/3** of Alzheimer's patients are women.
- African Americans are **twice as likely** as non-Hispanic white people to develop Alzheimer's disease.
- Latinos are **1.5 times as likely** to develop Alzheimer's disease in comparison to non-Hispanic white people.
- By 2030, nearly **40%** of all Americans living with Alzheimer's disease will be Black or Latino.
- **1 in 13** Asian, Native Hawaiian, or other Pacific Islander adults experience Subjective Cognitive Decline – which is the self-reported experience or worsening, more frequent confusion, or memory loss.

Data from Chicago Health and Aging Project [CHAP] study

Alzheimer's Association's 2021 Facts & Figures Report

ACT on Alzheimer's, 2016

Frequently Asked Questions: BrainGuide

Brain Health in a Box has been brought to you by the Alter Program, and BrainGuide by UsAgainstAlzheimer's – a free, brain health information platform. This FAQ answers some of the most common questions about BrainGuide. For more information, visit www.MyBrainGuide.org.

What is BrainGuide?

BrainGuide by UsAgainstAlzheimer's is a first-of-its-kind, free platform that empowers people with knowledge and resources to take the best next steps to manage their own or a loved one's brain health. BrainGuide helps people get started with support, wherever they are, in their brain health journey.

What does BrainGuide include?

BrainGuide includes a confidential memory questionnaire – taken over the phone or online in English or Spanish – followed by tailored education and resources based on the answers provided. The memory questionnaires can be self-administered or taken by a caregiver. BrainGuide is not intended to diagnose or make treatment recommendations regarding Alzheimer's or any other disease.

Who is BrainGuide designed for?

BrainGuide is designed for people of all ages and from all communities. Whether you are proactively working to improve your brain health, concerned about your memory, seeking more information after receiving a diagnosis or caring for a loved one living with Alzheimer's – BrainGuide offers relevant education and resources.

Does the BrainGuide questionnaire provide a diagnosis?

BrainGuide is not intended to diagnose or make treatment recommendations regarding Alzheimer's or any other disease. BrainGuide can guide you toward information and resources that help inform the next best steps you or a loved one can take.

Videos For Display

Our informational videos – available in English and Spanish – are a simple way for you to share BrainGuide with your community. Use a smart phone or tablet with a camera to scan the QR codes to access the videos online or find them available for download on your flash drive.



Sample Paragraph for Website or Bulletin

Please join us in spreading the word about the importance of brain health within your faith community. Education and awareness are key. We've drafted this brief description that you can post in your bulletin, or upload to your website. Feel free to edit to meet your needs.

“

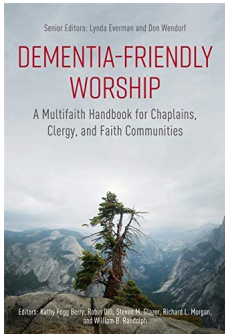
There are **millions** of people nationwide who worry about their own or a loved one's brain health. **Alzheimer's disease** is the most common form of dementia – a brain condition that slowly destroys memory and thinking skills. And it's a **major health** crisis. In the United States alone, there are approximately **6.2 million cases**. Yet, 60% of Alzheimer's cases in patients over 65 years old go unrecognized.

There are plenty of steps that you can take to keep a healthy brain – your body's most important organ! From eating a healthy diet and exercising, to staying social and getting enough rest. [Organization name] is committed to prioritizing brain health and brain health education in our community. Please join us!

By reading this, you've already taken the first step in your brain health journey. Keep the momentum going and learn more by visiting **BrainGuide by UsAgainstAlzheimer's** for free and actionable brain health resources—as well as a memory questionnaire that you can take on behalf of yourself or a loved one. Visit www.mybrainguide.org or call 855-262-4641 to learn more.”

Our Reading List

Scan the QR code using your smartphone to order.



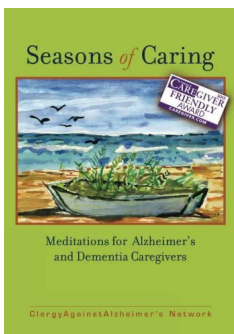
Dementia Friendly Workshop: **A Multifaith Handbook For** **Chaplains, Clergy, and Faith** **Communities**

This book provides help in developing services and creating dementia friendly communities.



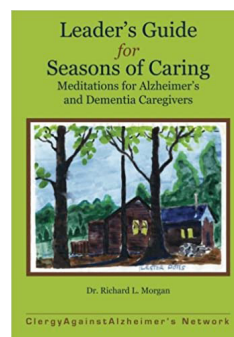
Stolen Memories: **An Alzheimer's Stole Ministry** **and Tallit Initiative**

This book describes the use of hand sewn, individualized stoles and stole-style tallitot in advocacy for Alzheimer's and related dementias.



Seasons of Caring: **Meditations for Alzheimer's** **and Dementia Caregivers**

This book includes meditations and prayers from writers from multiple faiths to give hope, encouragement, and empathy to caregivers and care partners.



Leader's Guide for Seasons of **Caring: Meditations for Alzheimer's** **and Dementia Caregivers**

This book is a companion volume to be used with Seasons of Caring by facilitators of caregiver support groups.

Presentation Script

Introduction

Today, I would like to join together in one of the most vital conversations for our community. Can you guess what that might be?

[Pause, let faith community take guesses]

DISPLAY SLIDE 1 (TITLE):

Those are all good guesses, and truly vital issues, however I want to talk about something that should be top of mind but is often overlooked – let's talk about brain health.

This is an important conversation, because an estimated 6.2 million Americans aged 65 and older are living with Alzheimer's disease.

SLIDE 2 (DEMENTIA):

For those of you who don't know, Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia. It's a progressive brain condition that slowly destroys memory and thinking skills.

SLIDE 3 (RISK FACTORS):

Alzheimer's affects people differently depending on race, gender, genetics, environmental and social factors, and more...

SLIDE 4 (INEQUITIES):

...Resulting in African Americans being twice as likely and Latinos 1.5 times as likely to develop Alzheimer's, compared to non-Hispanic white people.

SLIDE 5 (WOMEN):

Additionally, women make up 2/3 of Alzheimer's patients.

SLIDE 6 (12.7 MILL):

By 2050, the number of people aged 65 and older with Alzheimer's disease is expected to grow to 12.7 million.

To help start the conversation around brain health in your community, we have created a slide deck to go along with the script you see below. You can find the accompanying PowerPoint on the flash drive for download. You can modify the slides and script to fit your needs.

And despite those numbers, 60% of dementia cases remain undetected—and those that are detected are generally diagnosed in later stages of the disease.

For too long, fear and misunderstanding have prevented people from taking the first steps to protect their brain and identify troubling symptoms.

There has often been a misconception that “nothing can be done” about Alzheimer's and dementia.

Ways to take action

SLIDE 7 (TAKE CONTROL):

But that is far from the truth.

First, we must come together to spread a message of hope and empowerment—which is why I am raising this topic today.

You have the power to take charge of your own brain health... and to help those around you.

There are plenty of easy steps that we can all take to put our brain health into our own hands:

- Eating well: adopting a balanced diet that combines whole grains, fruits, vegetables and healthy proteins, while limiting things like sugar and red meat...
- Exercising: staying physically active through activities like walking, swimming or biking...
- Cutting out tobacco and reducing alcohol...

Presentation Script (continued)

- Getting 7-8 hours of sleep per night...
- And even simply socializing with friends, both within and outside of our faith community.

But, we also know that what works in one community may not work in another. We can't assume that everyone has a safe place to exercise ... an affordable source of fresh food ... or easy access to care.

Everyone can take a first step toward managing your brain health– and that first step will look different for each person who's taking it. But it is important for us to make sure that brain health guidance is positive, clear, and actionable.

About BrainGuide

SLIDE 8 (VIDEO):

That is where BrainGuide comes into play, and it can help everyone to take that first step. I will play this short intro video for you all, Say Hello to BrainGuide

PLAY VIDEO

SLIDE 9 (BRAINGUIDE):

BrainGuide is a first-of-its-kind platform that allows you to take a confidential memory questionnaire – for yourself, or someone you care about – and then see tailored brain health information based on your answers.

SLIDE 10 (QUESTIONS):

It's natural, as we get older, to worry or have questions about our memory. BrainGuide can help you start your journey with confidence, no matter where you are – whether you want to reduce your risk, navigate caregiving, or prepare for a doctor's visit.

SLIDE 11 (BRAINGUIDE GIVES):

[Faith community name] is proud to join forces with BrainGuide and the Alter Program to equip our community with this free and vital resource.

SLIDE 12 (URL / PHONE NUMBER):

You can access BrainGuide online at www.mybrainguide.org or by calling 855-272-4641.

Conclusions

SLIDE 13 (JOIN US):

By simply participating in this conversation right now, you are already taking an important first step in your brain health journey.

I challenge you to keep the momentum going... please join us in this brain health movement.

If we work together as one team, we can be brain health heroes for our families, our neighbors, our colleagues, and our faith community.

SLIDE 14 (BRAIN HEALTH SWAG):

And if you take the BrainGuide questionnaire, be sure to let us know. You'll receive a button, bookmark or fan to show everyone that you are a brain health hero!

Creating Dementia-Friendly Faith Communities

Fostering spiritual connection and meaningful engagement for those living with dementia and support for families, as we work together to stop Alzheimer's disease.

Fostering spiritual connection and meaningful engagement for those living with dementia and supporting their families can be life changing in one's everyday life navigating the disease. Here are some tips for making your faith community dementia friendly. We encourage you to photocopy this page and share it with your community.

Know your faith community members

Keep track and keep in touch. Taking note of attendance is a critically important basic step in developing connections to families who may be facing dementia.

Educate your faith community about dementia

Education empowers and prepares community members to serve the needs of those living with dementia and their care partners, reduces stigma and increases awareness about cognitive health.

- Invite a person living with dementia to speak about his or her personal experience.
- Speak and share materials about Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia.
- Share BrainGuide by UsAgainstAlzheimer's, a first-of-its kind platform offering private memory questionnaires, tailored brain health resources and education in English and Spanish.
- Become a Dementia Friend at dementiafriendsusa.org.

Create a safe and friendly environment

- Assess your facilities for safety and accessibility for people living with dementia.
- Display signs clearly identifying areas, such as restrooms.
- Accept and be sensitive to behaviors that people with dementia may display, such as talking, calling out, or walking about at inappropriate times. Respond flexibly to encourage people to remain involved or help them to another area if necessary.
- Invite members facing dementia to faith community events.
- Wear name tags.

- Make a special effort to invite individuals living with dementia and their families to participate in faith community events, such as study groups, concerts, plays, outings and preschool programs.
- Greet them warmly and participate with them.
- Offer a volunteer companion for a member with dementia when extra support is needed.
- Provide a quiet area where the person with dementia may go during the service as needed.
- Adapt worship services to be welcoming and supportive of people living with dementia. For guidance on designing and delivering services, refer to *Dementia Friendly Worship: A Multifaith Handbook for Chaplains, Clergy and Faith Communities*.

Encourage members with dementia to participate within your faith community

Enable members living with dementia to continue engaging in roles allowing them to serve God and others. As their dementia progresses, consider new ways to engage and involve them in the life or ministry of your community.

Encourage participation in community service projects or faith-based opportunities

Invite people living with dementia and their caregivers to join in service projects and faith-based opportunities for as long as possible. Feeling a sense of purpose and the satisfaction of using God-given skills to help others is invaluable.

Assess existing resources and how to share them with people living with dementia

- A youth group interested in service projects
- Members willing to provide meals for members in need
- An adult group or Sunday school class that could be empowered to provide care
- Prayer groups enlisted to pray for people living with dementia and their caregivers
- Service groups and service days dedicated to practical projects
- Singing groups or bands willing to perform
- Church van and driver to take members to church or appointments

Creating Dementia Friendly Faith Communities (continued)

Offer respite care to alleviate care partner stress and isolation

Respite care for loved ones and care partners of people experiencing dementia offers a short period of rest or relief. While caregivers have a break, faith community volunteers can lead art, physical exercise, music, games, a meal and other activities for family members with dementia to enjoy.

Pray

Never underestimate the power of ongoing prayer. Encourage your faith and lay leaders, and congregants to remember in prayer those who travel the path of memory loss. Consider a daily or weekly prayer chain and checkin program for families and caregivers of those who have dementia.

Encourage community members to adopt healthy lifestyles

Facilitate a physical, emotional and spiritual wellness program in support of holistic care of body, mind and spirit. People living with dementia can participate with all members in living life well through exercise, nutrition and social engagement.

Encourage members to volunteer for clinical trials

Clinical trials are the key to curing Alzheimer's, but they need more volunteers. Participants in a clinical trial benefit from the knowledge of the medical team running it and, for some, the experimental treatment could improve their health. Visit usagainstalzheimers.org/research.

Collect and lend resources

Compose a list of community resources to share—doctors, memory care facilities, adult day care centers, senior advocacy groups—and collect good, used adaptive medical equipment which families can borrow, as needed.

Educate and assist families in completing legal and financial planning

Offer a seminar for the faith community and local community on legal and financial planning focused on the difficult decisions that may surface following a dementia diagnosis.

Offer the joy of music through choirs and bands

Emerging research underscores the validity of music programs for people with dementia. Consider developing choirs and bands tailored for people with dementia and their caregivers.

Host a Memory Café

A Memory Café is a safe, supportive gathering for caregivers and those with cognitive impairment to participate in fun and engaging activities—enjoying the company of others as they interact, share concerns, celebrate, cry and find friendship.

Plan an initiative to sustain support

If your faith community is interested in better serving people living with dementia and their caregivers over the long term, consider forming a small group to examine options and resources. Create a plan and methodically work toward coordination. Collaborate with other interested faith communities and regional nonprofit organizations, including Dementia Friendly America.

Join the Stole Ministry and Tallit Initiative

Form a sewing group to create Alzheimer's stoles or tallitot for clergy members to wear to increase awareness, prompt action and promote dementia-friendly faith communities. Project overview, step by step instructions and photos are included in *Stolen Memories: An Alzheimer's Stole Ministry and Tallit Initiative*.

Get involved in advocacy for an Alzheimer's cure

Encourage members to join Faith United Against Alzheimer's—a coalition of UsAgainstAlzheimer's dedicated to mobilizing faith communities in the fight against Alzheimer's—to take action on critical topics, such as Alzheimer's research funding, brain health and caregiver support.

**FaithUnited
AgainstAlzheimer's**

usagainstalzhaimers.org/networks/faith

Excerpted from *When Words Fail: Practical Ministry to People with Dementia and Their Caregivers* by Rev. Kathy Fogg Berry, used by permission of Kregel Publications, 2450 Oak Industrial Dr. NE, Grand Rapids, MI and Westminster Canterbury Foundation, whenwordsfail.com; "The Dementia Friendly Church," by Rev. Dr. William B. Randolph, Discipleship Ministries, The United Methodist Church; "10 Steps," by ClergyAgainstAlzheimer's; and the Faith Sector Guide, Dementia Friendly America.

Informational Fact Sheets for Your Faith Community

Many people want to protect their brain health, but are unsure of the proper action to take. The following fact sheet outlines simple steps and lifestyle changes for those wondering 'where do I start?' Feel free to photocopy the next page and share it with your community.

Keep Your Brain Healthy

You have the power to take charge of your brain health. Regardless of your age or background, there are simple steps you can take to help protect your memory and thinking skills. Taking action can lower your risk of Alzheimer's disease.

Eat healthy food

The food you eat makes a big difference to your brain health. Visit BrainGuide to find out the right foods for healthy aging, learn how to find them on a budget, and try some sample menus.

Limit alcohol

Keep your brain healthy by limiting alcohol and drinking moderately, if at all. Excessive drinking may lead to a decline in brain health; however, drinking in moderation has not been found to increase or decrease the risk of dementia, according to Alzheimer's Disease International.

Don't smoke

Smoking increases the risk of heart attacks, strokes, lung diseases and blood pressure, all of which negatively affect brain health.

Keep your mind active

There are many fun activities that can help your brain health and protect your brain health. Play games, learn new skills, read, and solve brain puzzles to keep your brain active.

Exercise and stay fit

Keep yourself physically active. Older adults should get regular moderate exercise each week. This can include walking, swimming, or biking. The key is finding a routine that's right for you.

Get enough sleep

Sleep helps reduce the buildup of proteins linked to Alzheimer's disease. It also helps you feel better and keeps your immune system healthy.

Keep in touch

Staying in touch with friends and family helps keep the brain healthy. Research shows that talking to people and spending time with them can slow rates of memory problems. You're already off to a great start by being an active member of our faith community.

Take care of common health problems

Your brain health depends on your body's health. It's important to take care of other conditions like high blood pressure, diabetes and depression.

People concerned about memory and brain health for themselves or a loved one can visit www.MyBrainGuide.org to take a memory questionnaire and receive tailored resources based on the answers provided.

More Ways to Take Action

Looking to become a brain health hero? UsAgainstAlzheimer's has a variety of additional free, helpful resources beyond this toolkit for you and your community members to keep the momentum going! You can include the links and organizations listed on this page in your bulletins, emails, or file them into an online resource library.

A-LIST

Join the UsAgainstAlzheimer's A-LIST and answer monthly online surveys on brain health, caregiving, and dementia. Be part of the What Matters Most Insights study.

Find a Clinical Trial Location Near You

Enter your ZIP code to find Alzheimer's or dementia clinical trial or study sites near you. Then, call the site nearest you and tell the person who answers that you are interested in learning about being in a clinical trial.

For more information and resources, visit www.usagainstalzhimers.org/research

Brain Health Gifts

Within the box, you will also find some fun, branded brain health gifts for your faith community to enjoy!



Bookmarks



Fans



Buttons



**This Brain Health in a Box is made possible in
part through funding provided by the Zickler
Family Foundation, Biogen and Eisai.**

www.MyBrainGuide.org | 855-272-4641