

Forget-Me-Not Spotlight

Alzheimer's Disease & Dementia – What Everyone Needs to Know

By Steven R. Sabat

A review by Shannon Nosbisch, C.D.P., co-founder of Effingham Area Alzheimer's Awareness

Steven Sabat approaches Alzheimer's Disease and other dementia from a *biopsychosocial* aspect. This means that he discusses the biological aspects, psychological aspects and the social aspects. Biological aspects include a) signs & symptoms, b) areas of the brain that are damaged, c) genetic components, d) what drugs are prescribed, what do they do and do they help, and others.

The psychological aspects have a twofold affect, for the person living with dementia and for the person or persons caring for the person with dementia. Because people living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementia react differently from others living with the same disease, Sabat suggests that people living with dementia still want to be understood, sympathized with and even empathized with. As caregivers and family members he helps us understand how important it is to know how our loved one feels, what their world looks like and what matters most to them. By knowing these issues, we can help our loved one live a more productive and less stressful life.

We live in a social world where we interact with people much of the time, enjoying relationships of different kinds, some close and others more of an acquaintance. Social interactions are extremely important parts of our lives. What often happens with a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease or other dementia, is that the person experiences a loss of social relationships. Sabat wants us to think about what it would be like to be seen mostly, if not completely, as an "Alzheimer's patient". What would you do if that were happening to you? Can one be a friend to someone with dementia? If so, how?

This book is divided into seven chapters. In the Table of Contents, there are lists of questions that he answers in each chapter. So, if you want an answer to the question "What is the definition of the syndrome called dementia?", you would go to page 3. If you want to know "Does the person with Alzheimer's disease have 'memory loss' or is it 'memory dysfunction'?" you would go to page 30. By skimming the contents, you can find his answers to many different types of questions. He also uses examples of people that he has talked with in his practice.

By reading this book, the author hopes that you will be able to understand more about the person's condition, and be able to sympathize with him or her and understand how he or she is trying to cope with the cognitive losses entailed in the diagnosis. You will be able to see that the human being behind the diagnostic label is very often struggling to make life as good as it can be, to retain a semblance of self-respect and honor and to avoid being a burden, especially on those he or she loves most.

This resource will be available within a month at the Effingham Public Library, Flora Public Library, Evans Public Library, Newton Public Library, Greenup Township Public Library, Shelbyville Public Library and the Mattoon Public Library in the Forget-Me-Not Resource Center. If you do not have a library card, ask at the main desk how you can check it out.