



November 2010

## Memory Screening - Why Me? Why My Spouse? Why My Mom?

Do you find yourself forgetting more? Does it interfere with your social and family relationships? Could it be that you are worried about a diagnosis so you avoid asking your physician or bringing it to the attention of those who provide you medical oversight?



**Linda Fodrini-Johnson, MA, MFT, CMC**, is the Founder and Executive Director of Eldercare Services and is a Fellow and President of the National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers.

Or do you have concerns about the memory of a loved one, friend, spouse or client? It is difficult to share this with someone you respect – it just feels disrespectful to say you notice a problem with his or her memory. Why is that? It may be because we also don't want to hear that they have a diagnosis of "Alzheimer's" or "Lewy Body". Both denial and what I call, "not facing the elephant in the room" delay our having to grieve, plan and change our relationship with someone we care deeply about.

Well, don't beat yourself up if this is you – what I just described is human behavior and it buys us time. Sometimes buying time and denying the problem can be fine – as long as everyone is safe and the person in denial knows that at sometime in the near future they will have to acknowledge the "elephant".

Researchers and those who treat the progressive dementias recommend diagnosing earlier for some good reasons:

1. Possible treatments with drugs that help individuals with Alzheimer's function at a higher level.
2. The possibility that the individual

has a reversible dementia caused by a metabolic or other illness that could be as simple as an infection.

3. An early diagnosis allows the family and the person with the illness to participate in legal plans as well as care arrangements.

November is National "Memory Screening Month". The professional team at Eldercare Services is ready and willing to do a private memory screen for anyone who calls our office. We will also make referrals for those who need more comprehensive screenings.

Once a diagnosis is made, it is highly recommended that the family, including the person with the illness, participate in a family meeting to talk about how to keep quality in everyone's life and to provide a plan for when safety issues will need to be addressed for the "peace of mind" for all involved in what can be a 20+ year journey. Eldercare's professional Geriatric Care Managers act as family coaches guiding the decisions along the continuum of care – always

respecting the values and dignity of the individual with the dementia as well as the needs of the family caregivers.

Without a memory you only have the "moment." We can all work together to see that the moments are filled with as much joy and peace as we can pack into them.

The other side of this coin is the primary family caregiver; it is of utmost importance to plan to keep a balance so caregiving doesn't become a burden that turns into a "health incident" for the one who is keeping all the balls in the air. Finding that professional coach/care manager, even if you meet with that person only a few times a year, can make all the difference in successful family caregiving.

Visit the Walnut Creek Eldercare Services office for National Memory Screening Day to receive a free and confidential memory screening on Tuesday, November 16, 2010 from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Call (925) 937-2018 for registration, directions or more information.

**Eldercare Services provides Counseling, Support Groups, Home Care and Care Management to aid Family Caregivers. If you or someone you know could benefit from self-care, give us a call at (866) 760-1808.**



**ATTENTION!! Eldercare Answers is now green.**  
To ensure you or someone you know receives our newsletter, please send a valid email address to [DanielleG@EldercareAnswers.com](mailto:DanielleG@EldercareAnswers.com).



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Walnut Creek, CA 94595

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Eldercare Services has offices in Oakland, San Francisco and Walnut Creek, CA.  
Visit us on the web at <http://www.EldercareAnswers.com> for more information.

## Community Classes

### Walnut Creek

#### Families Dealing with Dementia

Friday, November 19, 2010 from 10 AM to Noon

**Class Registration:** Please call at least 3 days ahead

For more information regarding classes and support groups, visit us at [www.EldercareAnswers.com](http://www.EldercareAnswers.com) or call (925) 937-2018, (415) 469-8300 or email us at [info@EldercareAnswers.com](mailto:info@EldercareAnswers.com)

## Support Groups

When concerns for aging family members are part of every day life, or when they interfere with work, your health or other relationships, you need to join a support group.

#### Caring for An Aging Family Member

2nd Thursday of every month from 7 to 8:30 PM

1808 Tice Valley Blvd., Walnut Creek, CA 94595

1st Tuesday of every month from 6 to 7:30 PM

605 A Cheney St., San Francisco, CA 94131

**Cost for Support Groups:** None

**Support Group Registration:** Not required