



Who is Affected

When people think of dementia, they often picture a very old person, sitting quietly in a corner, slowly forgetting things. While it's true that dementia mostly affects people above 65, that image barely scratches the surface.

Dementia doesn't just affect the person with the condition, it affects **whole families, entire communities, and the fabric of everyday life**. And although aging increases the risk, dementia is **not** just about "getting old." It's a medical condition, and it can touch anyone.

In many homes across Kenya, both in rural villages and urban estates, there's someone who is living with dementia. But most families don't use that word. They say things like:

- ✚ "Babu keeps getting lost when he goes to the shop."
- ✚ "Shosho used to pray for hours, now she stares at the wall."
- ✚ "She doesn't know my name anymore."

These stories are real. They are repeated quietly in homes across the country. And the hardest part? **Most families are doing their best with no information, no guidance, and no name for what's happening.**

They are left:

- ✓ Confused about why their loved one has changed
- ✓ Frustrated by the repetition, mood swings, or strange behaviors
- ✓ Overwhelmed by caregiving, without knowing how to do it right
- ✓ Ashamed or afraid because of stigma, superstition, or judgment

Sometimes, dementia is mistaken for stress. Sometimes for mental illness. And in too many cases, it's seen as **witchcraft, punishment**, or something too shameful to speak of. That silence is dangerous; it keeps people isolated. It delays care. And it allows preventable suffering to continue.

And while it's less common, dementia **can also affect younger people** - even those in their 40s or 50s - through conditions like early-onset Alzheimer's or frontotemporal dementia. When that happens, families are even more confused. "How can someone so young be losing their memory?" they ask. And instead of care, they may face blame or disbelief.

So who is truly affected by dementia?

- ✓ **The elder who begins to forget the faces of her grandchildren**
- ✓ **The father who was once the pillar of the home, now unable to dress himself**
- ✓ **The adult child who suddenly becomes a full-time caregiver**
- ✓ **The neighbor who watches but doesn't know how to help**
- ✓ **The health worker who senses something is wrong but hasn't been trained to act**

This is why **DementiaAware Kenya** exists.

- ✓ To give this condition a name.
- ✓ To bring dignity where there has been shame.
- ✓ To help families understand that they are not cursed, and they are not alone.

✚ When we talk about dementia openly, we give people permission to seek help. When we raise awareness, we teach compassion. And when we build systems of care, we create a future where every person, no matter their age or memory, can live with dignity, and every caregiver can walk supported, not in silence, but in strength.