



## What is Dementia

*Dementia is a condition that slowly affects the way the brain works. Over time, it interferes with a person's ability to remember things, think clearly, communicate, and carry out simple daily tasks like cooking, dressing, or recognizing loved ones. It's not just about memory loss, it also affects how someone behaves, how they relate to others, and how they make decisions.*

Dementia is caused by **damage to brain cells**, often due to diseases that affect the structure and function of the brain. When brain cells are damaged, they struggle to communicate with each other. As more cells are affected, the person's abilities start to decline.

The most common type of dementia is **Alzheimer's disease**, which usually starts with mild forgetfulness but gradually gets worse over time. There are also other types such as:

- **Vascular dementia**, often caused by reduced blood flow to the brain
- **Lewy body dementia**, which can cause movement and sleep problems
- **Frontotemporal dementia**, which may affect personality and language more than memory at first

It's important to understand that **dementia is not the same as normal aging**. While it's normal for older people to forget small things occasionally, dementia is different. It causes

serious, ongoing problems that make it hard for someone to live independently without support.

In our communities, many people assume dementia is just "growing old" or "losing your mind." Some believe it's caused by witchcraft, curses, or punishment for past wrongdoing.

These beliefs lead to stigma, fear, and even abuse. But dementia is a **medical condition** - not a moral failure or spiritual attack. It needs understanding, not blame.

Another thing we must remember is that a **person with dementia is still a person**. They may forget your name, or forget how to dress, but they still feel love, fear, sadness, and joy. They deserve respect. They deserve to be treated with patience, kindness, and dignity.

Dementia is not something we should fear - it's something we should learn about, talk about, and prepare for. Because it's already in our homes, our churches, our neighborhoods. Many families are dealing with it quietly, without knowing what to call it or how to cope. Raising awareness helps us to respond better, care better, and love better.



At DementiaAware Kenya, we are committed to making sure no one walks this journey alone. By talking openly about what dementia is, we hope to build a community that understands, accepts, and supports those affected.