

Appendix I: Early Warning Signs of Cognitive Change

The following table outlines some of the early warning signs of cognitive challenges that caregivers and health professionals can detect. The signs can be used to identify individuals who should be assessed for dementia.

Table 8: Early Warning Signs Suggesting Cognitive Challenges

SIGNS CAREGIVERS CAN DETECT	SIGNS HEALTH PROFESSIONALS CAN DETECT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Difficulty performing familiar tasks ■ Problems with language <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Confusion with regard to time and place ■ Poor and decreased judgment ■ Problems with abstract thinking ■ Misplacing things ■ Changes in mood and behaviour ■ Changes in personality ■ Loss of initiative ■ Memory loss affecting day-to-day function 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Frequent phone calls/appointments—missing/wrong day ■ Poor historian, vague, seems “off,” repetitive questions or stories ■ Poor compliance meds/instructions ■ Appearance/mood/personality/behaviour ■ Word-finding/decrease social interaction ■ Subacute change in function without clear explanation/frequent visits to ER ■ Confusion—surgery/illness/meds ■ Weight loss/dwindles/“failure to thrive” ■ Driving—accidents/problems/tickets/family concerns ■ Head turning sign (turning to caregiver for answer)

Source: Reprinted from “Dementia and Screening Assessment,” by Regional Geriatric Program of Eastern Ontario, n.d. Retrieved from <http://giic.rgps.on.ca/sites/default/files/1b%20Dementia%20screening%20overview.pdf> Reprinted with permission.

Seven A's of Dementia

Some health-care providers also use the Seven A's of dementia to identify common signs. The A's are: anosognosia, agnosia, aphasia, apraxia, altered perception, amnesia, and apathy. For more information, visit the Alzheimer Society of Canada website at: <http://www.alzheimer.ca/en/york/About-dementia/What-is-dementia/Seven-A-s-of-dementia>