

The Stages of Dementia: Global Deterioration Scale for Assessment of Primary Degenerative Dementia (GDS) (also known as the Reisberg Scale)

Diagnosis/Clinical Criteria	Stage/Gerda's dates	Signs and Symptoms
No Dementia	<p>Stage 1: No Cognitive Decline</p>	<p>In this stage the person functions normally, has no memory loss, and is mentally healthy. People with NO dementia would be considered to be in Stage 1.</p>
No Dementia, but personal awareness of some functional decline.	<p>Stage 2: Very Mild Cognitive Decline</p> <p>Gerda: 2002, age 53</p>	<p>This stage is used to describe normal forgetfulness associated with aging; for example, forgetfulness of names and where familiar objects were left. Symptoms are not evident to loved ones or the physician. The person functions like a normal older adult.</p>
<p>No Dementia</p> <p>Memory problems are slight but consistent; some difficulties with time and problem solving; daily life slightly impaired</p>	<p>Stage 3: Mild Cognitive Decline</p> <p>Gerda: 2007, age 58</p> <p>Went for 1st assessment in 2010, age 61</p> <p>Stopped driving in 2012 Went for 2nd neuro assessment in 2012, age 63 —do not yet formally meet all the criteria for stage 4</p>	<p>This stage includes increased forgetfulness, slight difficulty concentrating, decreased work performance. People may get lost more often or have difficulty finding the right words. At this stage, a person's loved ones will begin to notice a cognitive decline. Noticeable deficits in demanding job situations.</p> <p>Average duration: 7 years before onset of dementia.</p>
<p>Early-stage</p> <p>Memory loss moderate, especially for recent events, and interferes with daily activities. Moderate difficulty with solving problems; cannot function independently at community</p>	<p>Stage 4: Moderate Cognitive Decline</p> <p>Gerda: I met some of these criteria 2nd assessment, April, 2013 (yellow highlight); I met</p>	<p>This stage includes difficulty concentrating, decreased memory of recent events, and difficulties managing finances or traveling alone to new locations. People have trouble completing complex tasks efficiently or accurately and</p>

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<p>affairs; difficulty with daily activities and hobbies, especially complex ones. At this stage a physician can detect clear cognitive problems during a patient interview and exam. In my 3rd test, my neuropsychologist noted that my "performance was significantly slower than in 2012...and scores represent a decline from [2012] performance."</p>	<p>additional stage 4 criteria in my 3rd assessment, at age 67 (turquoise highlight). Some of my test scores now fall in the average/below average range, worse than before.</p>	<p>may be in denial about their symptoms. They may also start withdrawing from family or friends, because socialization becomes difficult. Requires assistance in complicated tasks such as handling finances, pulling off family gatherings & parties, etc.</p> <p>Average duration: 2 years</p>
<p>Mid-Stage Requires assistance in choosing proper attire.</p>	<p>Stage 5: Moderately Severe Cognitive Decline</p> <p>Gerda: (2016), age 67 Some days these symptoms apply to me (turquoise highlight)</p> <p><u>My mother</u> reached this stage at age 72 and had to enter an assisted living center. She constantly complained about depression and loneliness, despite seeing a family member several times a week at first, and soon daily or twice daily.</p>	<p>People in this stage have major memory deficiencies and need some assistance to complete their daily activities (dressing, bathing, preparing meals). Memory loss is more prominent and may include major relevant aspects of current lives; for example, people may not remember their address or phone number and may not know the time or day or where they are.</p> <p>Average duration: 1.5 years</p>
<p>Mid-Stage More profound memory loss, only retaining highly learned material; disoriented with respect to time and place; lacking good judgment and difficulty handling problems; little or no independent function at home; can only do simple chores and has few interests.</p>	<p>Stage 6: Severe Cognitive Decline (Middle Dementia)</p> <p>Gerda: (2019?), age 70?</p> <p><u>My mother</u> reached this stage at age 80</p>	<p>People in Stage 6 require extensive assistance to carry out daily activities. They start to forget names of close family members and have little memory of recent events. Many people can remember only some details of earlier life. They also have difficulty counting down from 10 and finishing tasks.</p>

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		<p>Requires assistance dressing, bathing, and toileting. Experiences urinary and fecal incontinence. Ability to speak declines. Personality changes, such as delusions (believing something to be true that is not), compulsions (repeating a simple behavior, such as cleaning), or anxiety and agitation may occur.</p> <p>Average duration: 2.5 years</p>
<p>Late-Stage Speech ability declines to about a half-dozen intelligible words. Progressive loss of abilities to walk, sit up, smile, and hold head up.</p>	<p>Stage 7: Very Severe Cognitive Decline (Late Dementia)</p> <p>Gerda: (2025?), age 75? Per this timeline, I could take until 2027/8, age 78/9, before I would naturally die as a result of dementia?</p> <p><u>My mother</u> died at 82, ten years after the onset of stage 5.</p>	<p>People in this stage have essentially no ability to speak or communicate. They require assistance with most activities (e.g., using the toilet, eating). They often lose psychomotor skills, for example, the ability to walk. Severe memory loss; not oriented with respect to time or place; no judgment or problem solving abilities; cannot participate in community affairs outside the home; requires help with all tasks of daily living and requires help with most personal care. Often incontinent.</p> <p>Average duration: 2.5 years</p>

(Reisberg, et al., 1982; DeLeon and Reisberg, 1999)