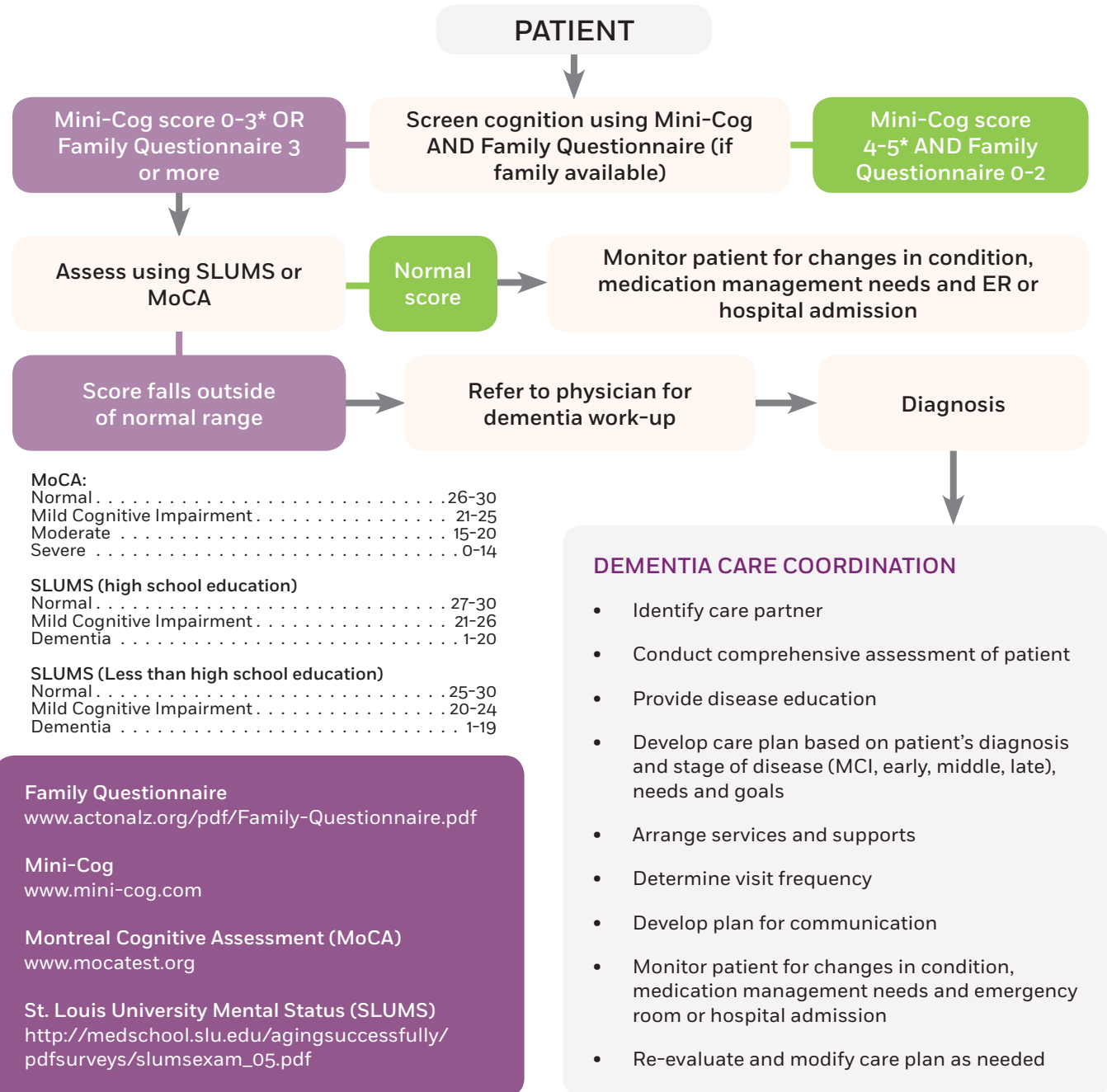


## Cognitive Impairment Identification and Dementia Care Coordination\*\*



\*A cut point of <3 on the Mini-Cog has been validated for dementia screening, but many individuals with clinically meaningful cognitive impairment will score higher. When greater sensitivity is desired, a cut point of <4 is recommended as it may indicate a need for further evaluation of cognitive status.

\*\*The latest DSM-5 manual uses the term "Major Neurocognitive Disorder" for dementia and "Mild Neurocognitive Disorder" for mild cognitive impairment. This ACT on Alzheimer's resource uses the more familiar terminology, as the new terms have yet to be universally adopted.

# Dementia Care Plan Checklist

With the patient and care partner, create a person-centered plan to meet identified needs, address barriers and set goals based on the patient's values.

## Conduct comprehensive assessment of patient (include care partner).

- Person-centered care includes understanding cultural context in which people are living ([www.actonalz.org/cultural-competency-awareness](http://www.actonalz.org/cultural-competency-awareness))
- Screening and diagnosis of diverse populations ([www.actonalz.org/screening-diverse-populations](http://www.actonalz.org/screening-diverse-populations))

## Educate the patient and care partner about diagnosis and disease process.

- Contact Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline at 1-800-272-3900 or visit [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org)
- Refer to Taking Action Workbook ([www.alz.org/i-have-alz/downloads/lwa\\_pwd\\_taking\\_action\\_workbook.pdf](http://www.alz.org/i-have-alz/downloads/lwa_pwd_taking_action_workbook.pdf))
- Culturally responsive resources ([www.actonalz.org/culturally-responsive-resources](http://www.actonalz.org/culturally-responsive-resources))

## Develop care plan based on patient's diagnosis and stage of disease, needs and goals.

### Medication Therapy and Management

- Discuss prescribed and over-the-counter medications
- Refer to pharmacist for medication review and to simplify medication regimen
- Work with patient's health care team to create a medication management plan
- Educate patient and care partner on medication management aids (pill organizers, dispensers, alarms)

*Patients in middle and late stages will require medication oversight from care partner or health care professional.*

### Maximize Abilities

- Work with patient's health care team to treat conditions that may worsen symptoms or lead to poor outcomes, including depression and co-existing medical conditions (e.g., diabetes, blood pressure, sleep dysregulation)
- Encourage patient to stop smoking and/or limit alcohol
- Refer to occupational therapy to maximize ability for self care
- Encourage lifestyle changes that may reduce disease symptoms or slow their progression (e.g., establish routines for person with disease and care partner)

### Care Partner Education and Support (if patient has a care partner)

- Refer to support groups, respite care, caregiver education and training programs, and caregiver coaching services.
- Call the Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline at 1-800-272-3900 or visit [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org)
- Contact the Eldercare Locator at [www.eldercare.gov](http://www.eldercare.gov) or 1-800-677-1116

### Health, Wellness and Engagement

- Encourage regular physical activity and healthy eating
- Contact the Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline at 1-800-272-3900 for engagement programs
- Encourage socialization and participation in activities the patient enjoys

See *Living Well Workbook for recommendations* ([www.alz.org/mnnd/documents/15\\_ALZ\\_Living\\_Well\\_Workbook\\_Web.pdf](http://www.alz.org/mnnd/documents/15_ALZ_Living_Well_Workbook_Web.pdf)).

## Dementia Care Plan Checklist (cont.)

### Home and Personal Safety

- Refer to an occupational therapist and/or physical therapist to address fall risk, sensory/mobility aids and home modifications
- Obtain MedicAlert® + Alzheimer's Association Safe Return® (call 1-800-272-3900 or visit [www.alz.org/care/dementia-medic-alert-safe-return.asp](http://www.alz.org/care/dementia-medic-alert-safe-return.asp))
- Refer to occupational therapy for driving evaluation ([http://myaota.aota.org/driver\\_search/index.aspx](http://myaota.aota.org/driver_search/index.aspx))
- Educate patient and care partner about safe driving (see *At the Crossroads* at [www.thehartford.com/advance50/publications-on-aging](http://www.thehartford.com/advance50/publications-on-aging) or Dementia and Driving Resource Center at [www.alz.org/driving](http://www.alz.org/driving))

### Legal Planning

- Refer to an elder law attorney
- Encourage patient to assign durable power of attorney and health care directive

### Advance Care Planning

- Encourage patient and family to discuss and document preferences for care when patient is not able to make decisions (download state specific advance directive forms at [www.caringinfo.org](http://www.caringinfo.org))
- Call the Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline at 1-800-272-3900 or visit [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org)

*In middle and late stages, discuss palliative care and hospice with patient and care partner.*

## Arrange services and supports.

- Visit the Eldercare Locator at [www.eldercare.gov](http://www.eldercare.gov) or call 1-800-677-1116 to get connected to aging services such as financial assistance, home delivered meals, transportation, adult day services and long-term care options in every community across the US
- Contact the Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline at 1-800-272-3900 or [www.alz.org](http://www.alz.org) for information, education and support
- Culturally responsive supports and resources: [www.actonalz.org/culturally-responsive-resources](http://www.actonalz.org/culturally-responsive-resources)

## Determine visit frequency and plan for communication.

- Schedule regular check-ins with the patient and care partner (consider monthly face-to-face visits until relationship is established)
- Educate patient and care partner to contact care coordinator for changes in condition, assistance with medication management and emergency room or hospital admission

## Re-evaluate and modify care plan as needed.

# Mild Cognitive Impairment and Stages of Alzheimer's: Symptoms and Duration of Disease

**Alzheimer's symptoms vary.** The information below provides a general idea of how abilities change during the course of the disease. Not everyone will experience the same symptoms nor progress at the same rate. Find additional information on the stages of Alzheimer's at: [www.alz.org/alzheimers\\_disease\\_stages\\_of\\_alzheimers.asp](http://www.alz.org/alzheimers_disease_stages_of_alzheimers.asp)

## Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI)

[www.mayoclinic.com/health/mild-cognitive-impairment/DS00553](http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/mild-cognitive-impairment/DS00553)

- Mild forgetfulness
- Increasingly overwhelmed by making decisions, planning steps to accomplish a task or interpreting instructions
- Mild difficulty finding way in unfamiliar environments
- Mild impulsivity and/or difficulty with judgment
- Family and friends notice some or all of these symptoms
- IADLs only mildly compromised; ADLs are intact

## Alzheimer's Disease Early Stage 2-4 years in duration

- Increased short-term memory loss
- Difficulty keeping track of appointments
- Trouble with time/sequence relationships
- More mental energy needed to process information
- Trouble multi-tasking
- May write reminders, but lose them
- Mild mood and/or personality changes
- Increased preference for familiar things
- IADLs more clearly impaired; ADLs slightly impaired

## Alzheimer's Disease Middle Stage 2-10 years in duration

- Significant short-term memory loss; long-term memory begins to decline
- Fluctuating disorientation
- Diminished insight
- Changes in appearance
- Learning new things becomes very difficult
- Restricted interest in activities
- Declining recognition of acquaintances, relatives
- Mood and behavioral changes
- Alterations in sleep and appetite
- Wandering
- Loss of bladder control
- IADLs and ADLs broadly impaired

## Alzheimer's Disease Late Stage 1-3 years in duration

- Severe disorientation to time and place
- No short-term memory
- Long-term memory fragments
- Loss of speech
- Difficulty walking
- Loss of bladder/bowel control
- No longer recognizes family members
- Inability to survive without total care

## Resources

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