Fear of Developing Dementia

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Personal Concerns

• Take a moment to reflect on what concerns you have about developing dementia.
Cognitive Functioning & Dementia

- Memory functioning
- Language
- Visuospatial
- Attention / Concentration
- Reasoning / Abstraction
- Planning / Judgment

- “Diagnosis of exclusion”
Multidimensional Impact

- Individual
- Family
- Social Networks
- Societal

$76.8 Billion
Dementia Worry

• “Emotional response to the perceived threat of developing dementia”

• Health Worry

• Aging Anxiety
  ▫ Concerns related to decline in health, physical functioning, well-being, etc.

Kessler et al. (2012)
Dementia Worry

• Threat to Human Identity
  ▫ Awareness
  ▫ “Symbolic” Self
  ▫ Shared Reality

• Stigma?
  ▫ Would you be treated differently?

Kessler et al. (2012)
When Something Doesn’t Seem Right
Anticipatory Dementia

- Subjective concern of decline in memory functioning
- Fear that this decline is the early stage of dementia (or sign of the future)
- The role of family history

Cutler & Hodgson (1996)
Fear of Dementia

• Personal Concerns

• Most Endorsed Concerns:
  ▫ Loss of Decision-Making Abilities
  ▫ Loss of Relationships
  ▫ Loss of Language/Communication Abilities
  ▫ Decline in Physical/Mental/Emotional Health
  ▫ Being a Burden
Different Types of Fear

• Fear of Becoming a Burden
  ▫ “I will be an emotional burden to others”

• Fear of the Impact on the Self
  ▫ “I will no longer be able to remember by childhood”

• Anticipatory Fears
  ▫ “I have at risk for developing Alzheimer’s disease”
You Have the Fear, Now What?

• Where do you go for information?

• Where do you go for support?

• What do you try to do?
What this Means for You

- Confrontation with Personal Aging
- Importance of Communication/Planning
- Importance of Supporting Others
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