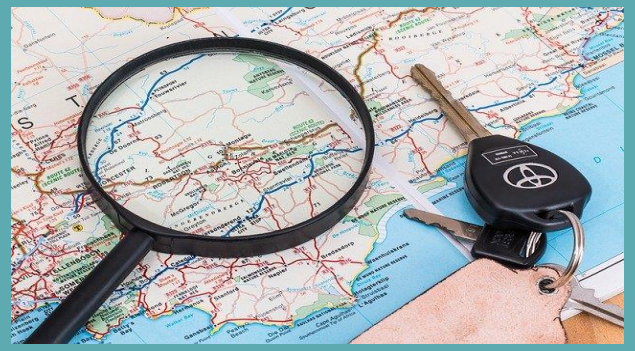
Mental Health America of the MidSouth

Assessing Early Dementia



How to Have the “Car Key” Talk

Presented by Lynn Wood, Caregiver Support Coordinator

Disclaimer

We are not therapists; we are educators. The information you will see and hear in this presentation is educational only, and not to be taken as advice from a licensed mental health professional and should not be substituted for the information given in a clinical environment. If you (or someone you know) needs mental health treatment or advice, we recommend speaking to a licensed mental health professional.

Objectives

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Normal Aging vs Not Normal Aging

Early Signs of Alzheimer’s and other Dementias

Dementia and Driving

Crafting the Car Key Conversation

Professional Help

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What Is Normal Aging?

- Can’t recall a word. Describe the word to get it to pop up.
- Give people time to process information. Go more slowly.
- Slower to think.
- Slower to do.
- May hesitate more.
- More likely to look before they leap.
- Will know the person, but not find the name.
- May pause when word finding.
- New data reminds me of old data.

Alzheimer's Disease and other Dementias

Genetic syndromes

Parkinson's Disease

Vascular Dementia

Huntington's Disease

Alzheimer's Disease

- ***Young Onset***
- ***Late Life Onset***

Lewy Body

Dementia

Creutzfeldt-Jakob

Drugs/toxin exposure

ETOH related

Pick's Disease

Not Normal Aging

- Unable to think the same
- Unable to do as before
- Unable to get started on a task
- Will get stuck in a moment of time
- Unable to think things out
- Unable to successfully place a person
- Words won’t come even with visual, verbal, or touch cues
- Confused between past and present
- Personality and/or behaviors will be different

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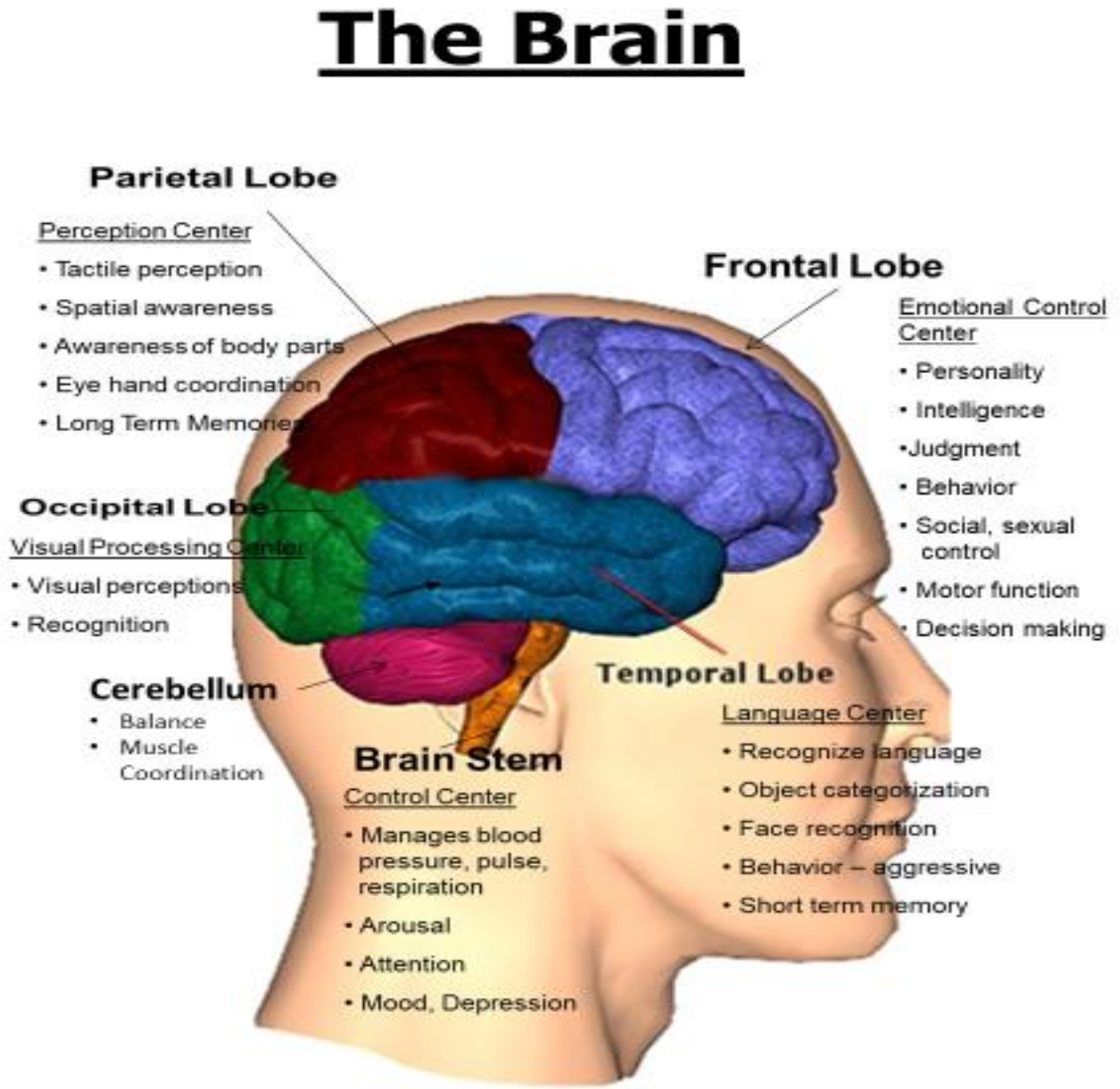
Dementia and Driving Difficulties

Alzheimer's Disease and other Dementias



Emotional Control Center

Personality

Intelligence

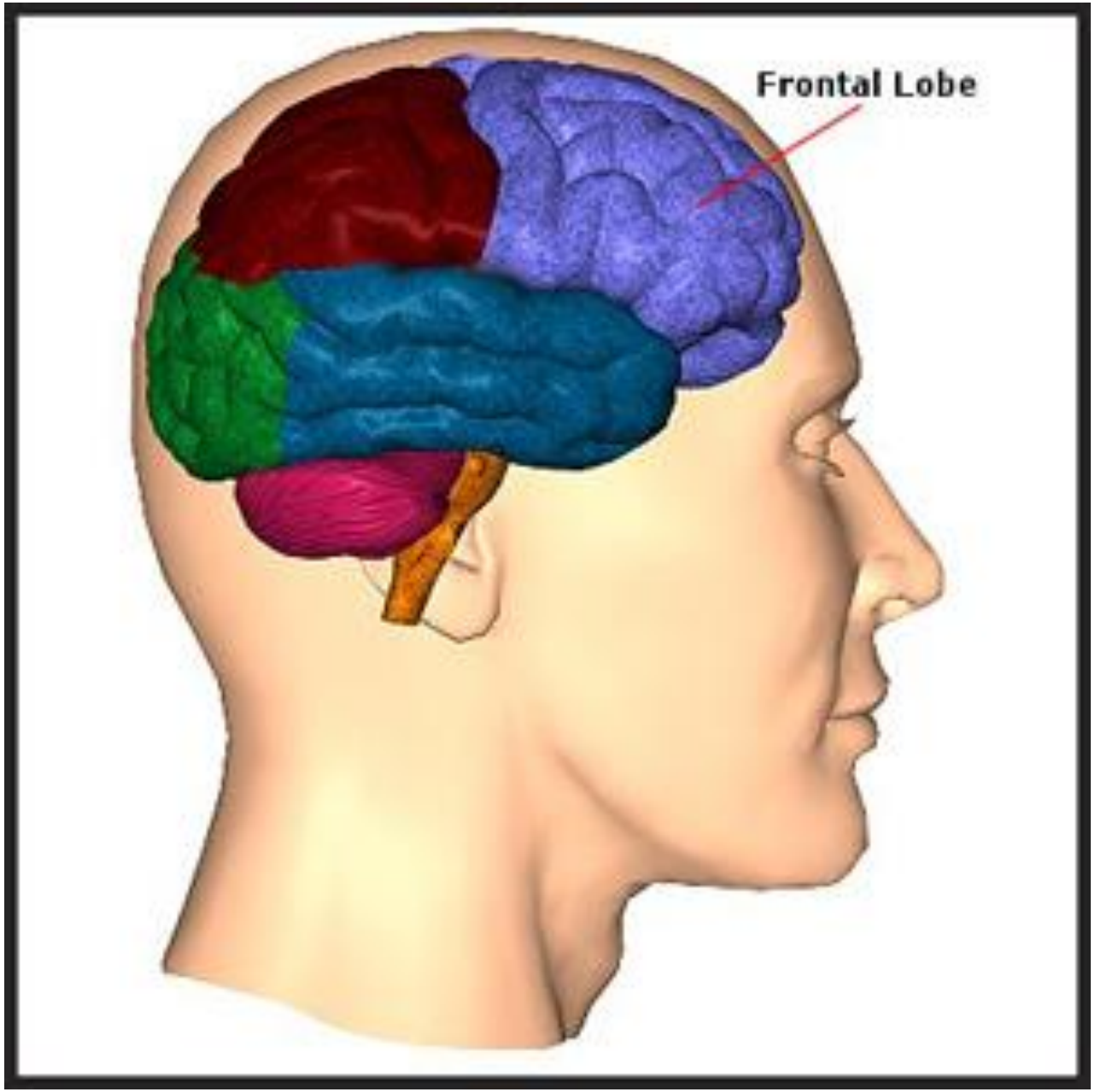
Judgment

Behavior

Social, sexual control

Motor function

Decision making



Language Center

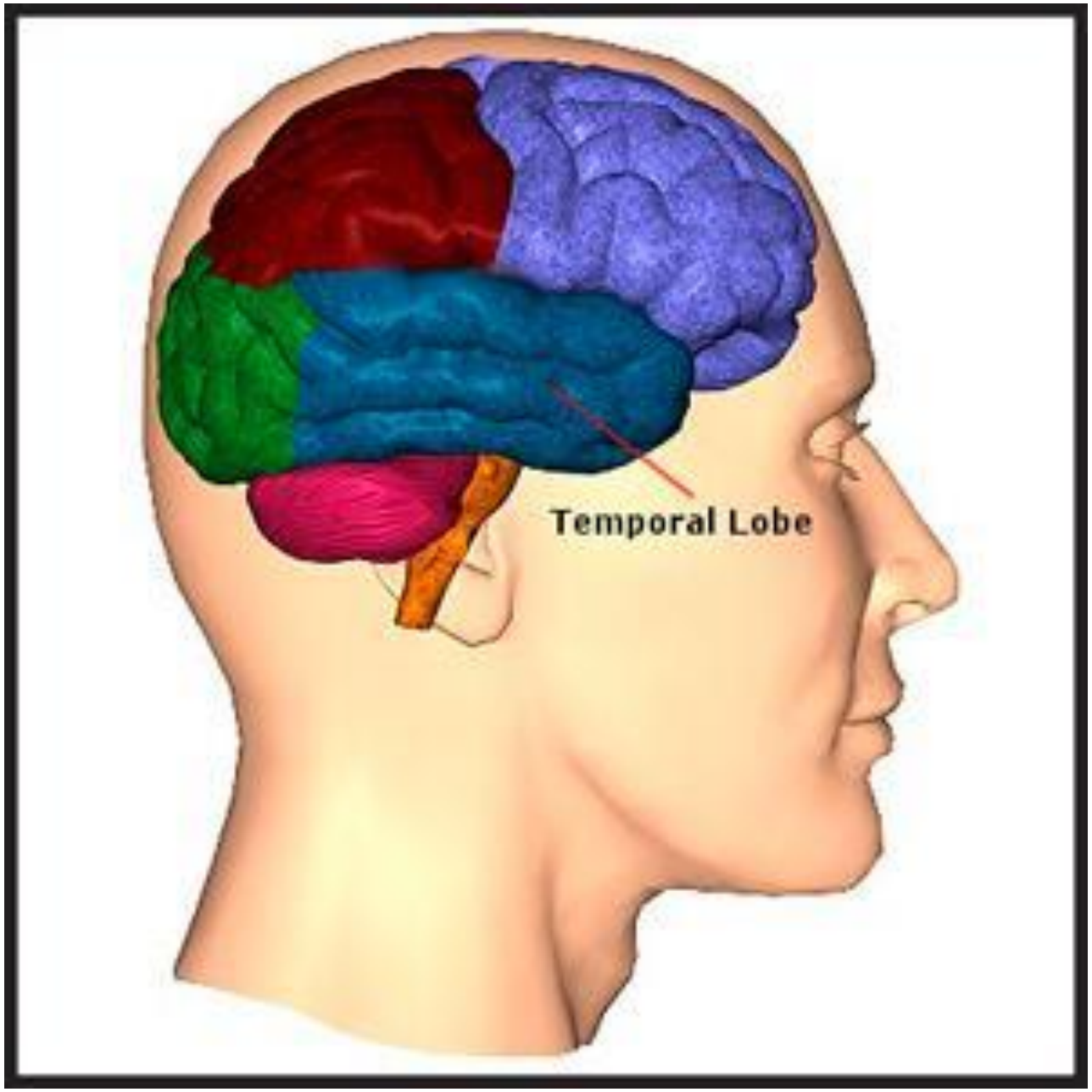
Recognize language

Object categorization

Face recognition

Behavior-aggressive

Short term memory



Perception Center

Tactile perception

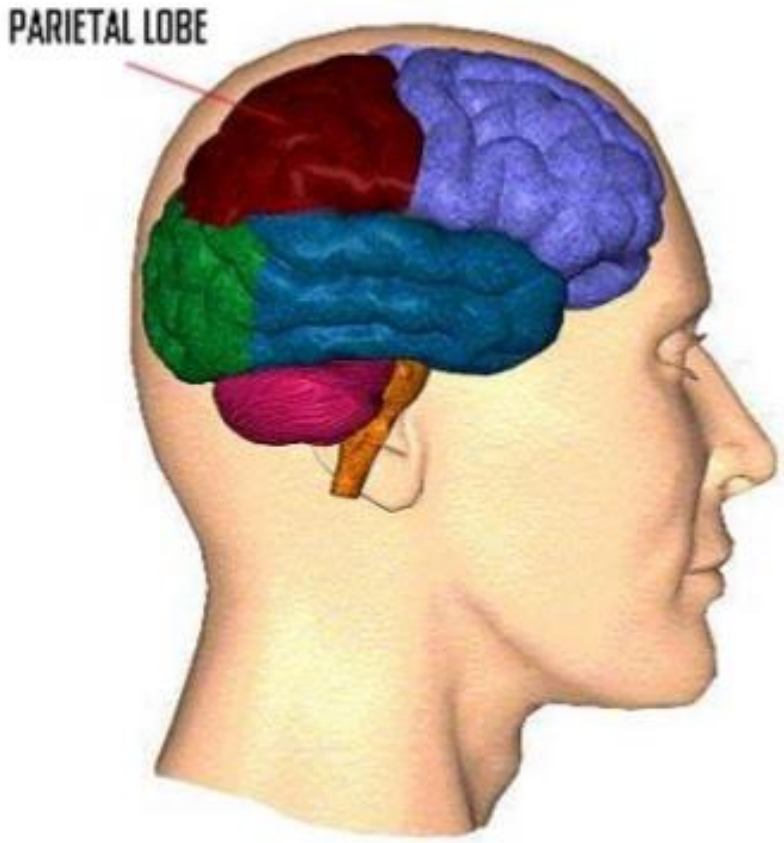
Spatial awareness

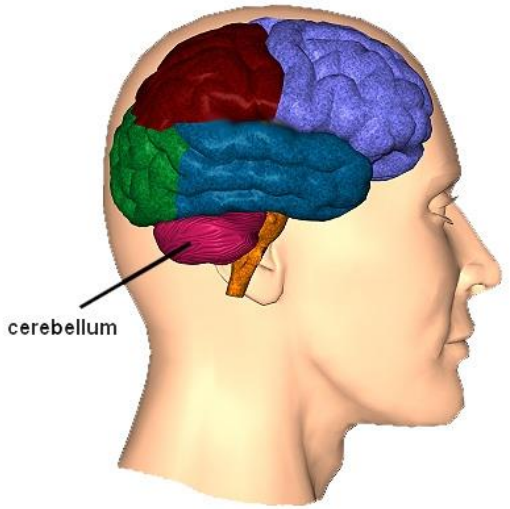
Awareness of body parts

Eye hand coordination

Long term memories

What does the Parietal Lobe do?





Cerebellum

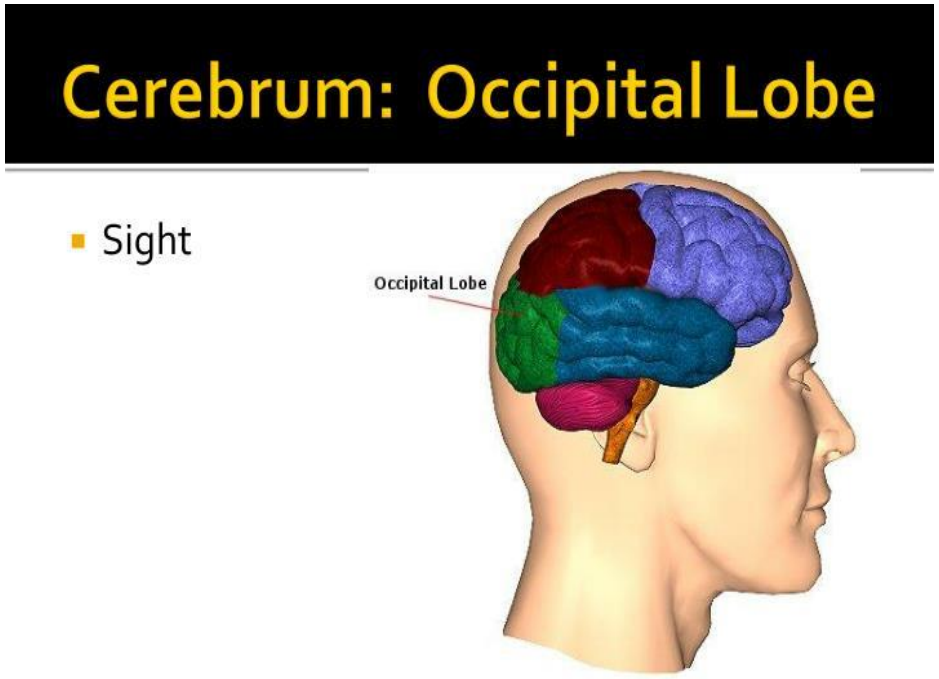
Balance

Muscle coordination

Visual Processing Center

Visual perceptions

Recognition



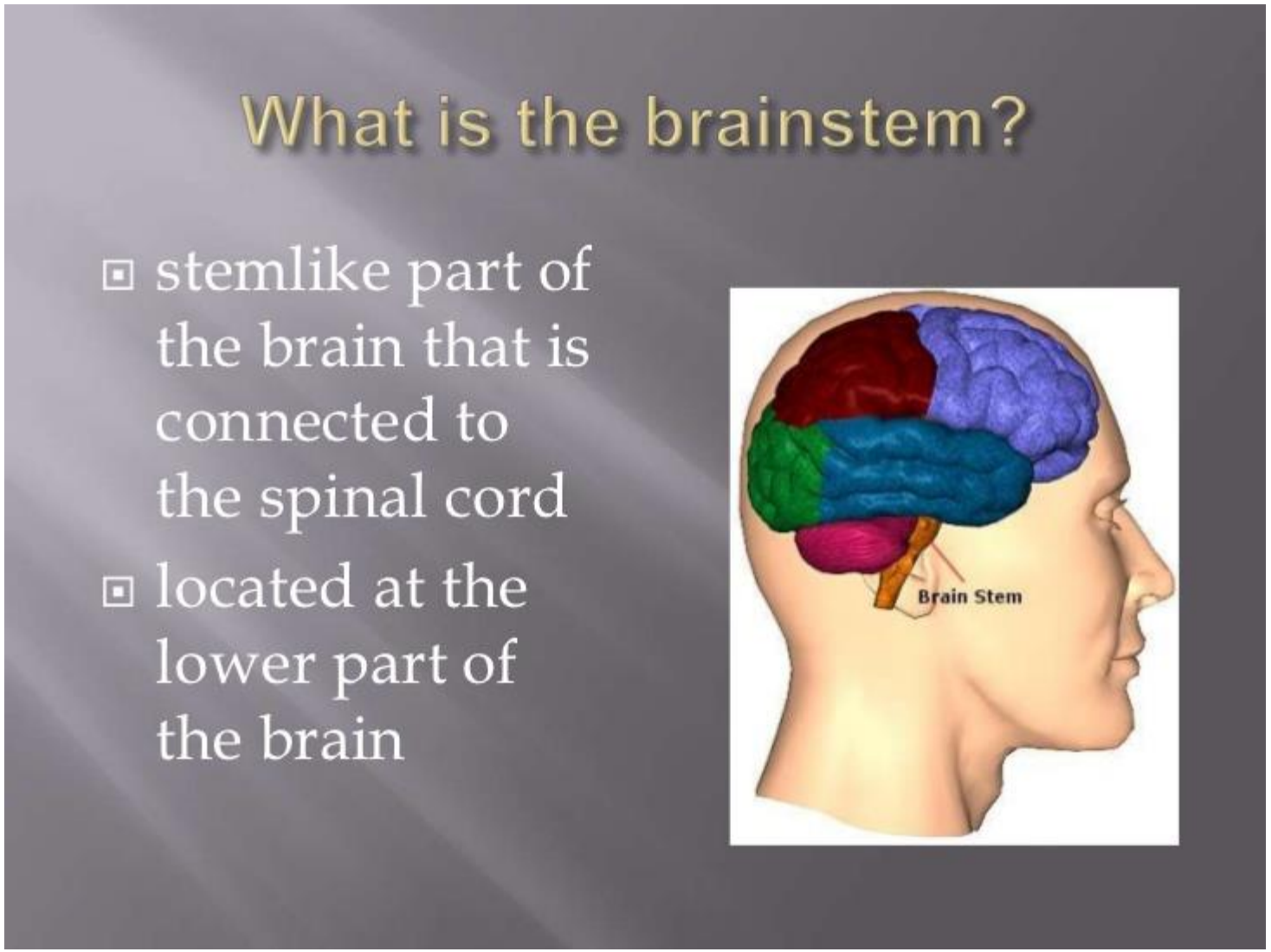
Control Center

Manages blood pressure, pulse, respiration

Arousal

Attention

Mood, depression



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We Should Talk . . .

Crafting the Car Key Conversation

- Finding a Balance
  - Start Early
  - Go Slow

Opening Lines

- “Heath and safety first.”
- “Driving isn’t what it used to be.”
- “Did you hear about the car accident in the news today?”

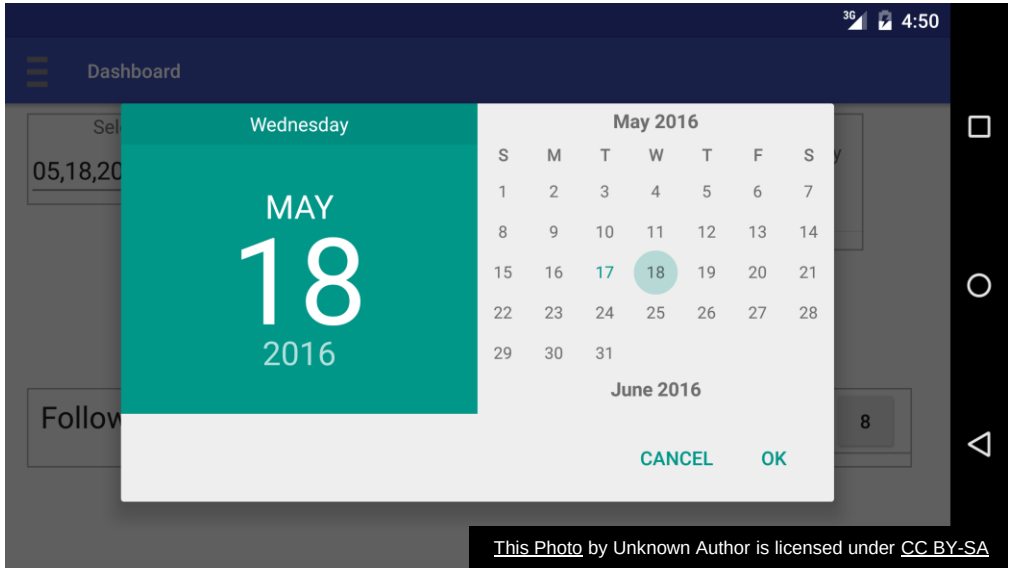
The Focus . . .

It’s more important to avoid accidents or death than to avoid unpleasant topics.

Who should be the messenger?

- Is the driver your spouse or your parent?
  Yes____ No____
- Do you have the person's best interests in mind?
  Yes____ No____
- Do you know the person's physical and cognitive condition? Yes____ No____
- Do you know the person's driving abilities?
  Yes____ No____
- Do you have a good relationship with the person?
  Yes____ No____

When is a good time to talk?



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- Change in frequency or severity of warning signs
  - Not right after an accident/incident
- Change in health, medication or cognitive status
  - Not on the ride home from the appt
- Change in financial situation or vehicle ownership
  - Not at the DMV, law office or bank

What do you want your conversation to accomplish?

- Assure Older Adult of family's willingness to help.
- Discover Older Adult's transportation needs.
- Review observations of warning signs that retiring from driving may be needed.
- Planning alternative transportation.

Professional Resources

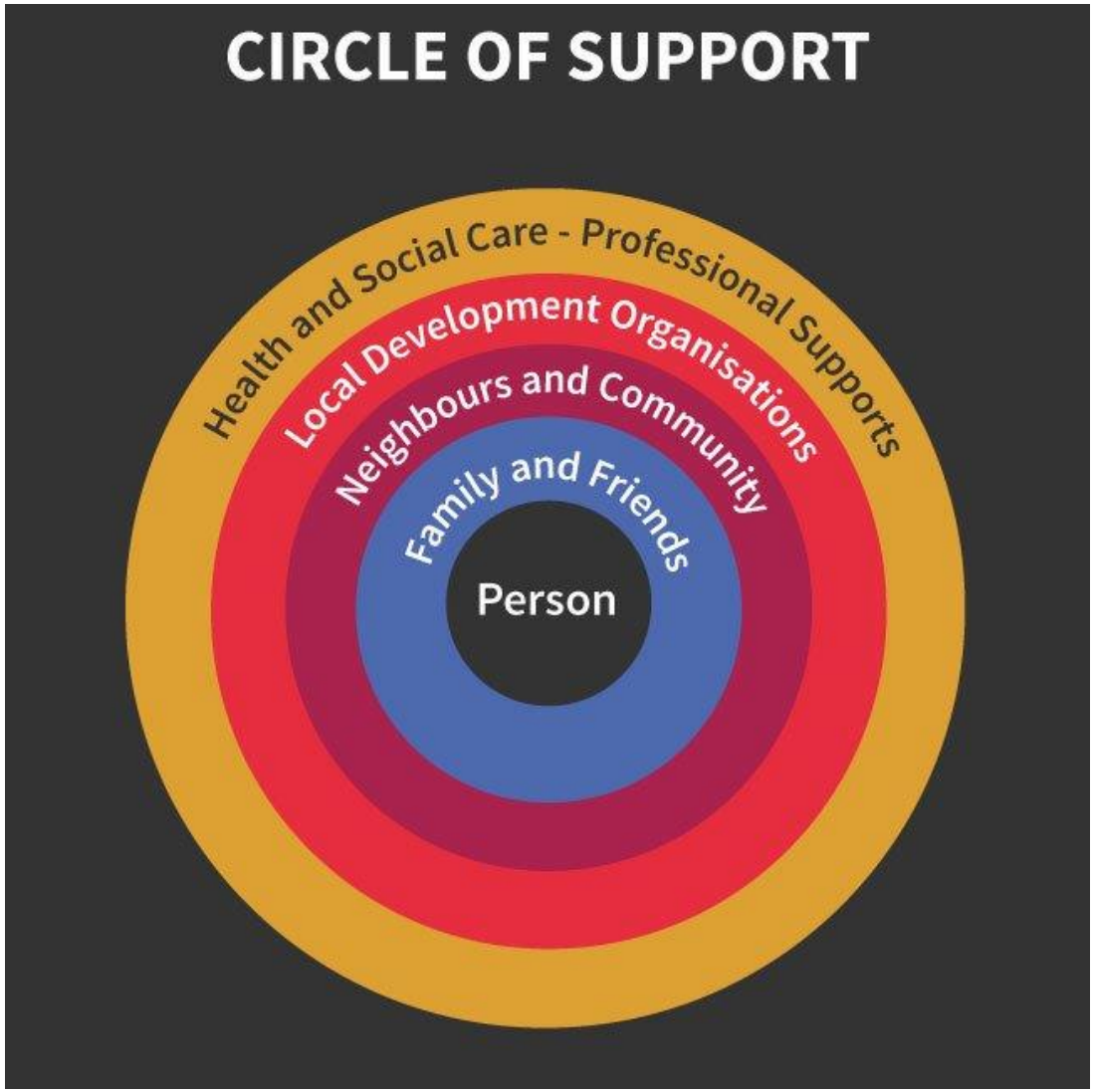
AT THE CROSSROADS

Family Conversations about Alzheimer's Disease, Dementia & Driving.

This guidebook helps families determine when it's time for loved ones with dementia to stop driving and helps them cope with driving cessation.

Driving Behavior Warning Signs – When Noticed, How Often

1. Decrease in confidence while driving	2. Difficulty turning to see when backing up	3. Riding the brake	4. Easily distracted while driving	5. Other drivers often honk horns	6. Incorrect signaling
7. Difficulty parking within a defined space	8. Hitting curbs	9. Scrapes or dents on the car, mailbox or garage	10. Increased agitation or irritation when driving	11. Failure to notice important activity on the side of the road	12. Failure to notice traffic signs
13. Trouble navigating turns	14. Driving at inappropriate speeds	15. Not anticipating potentially dangerous situations	16. Uses a “copilot”	17. Bad judgment on making left hand turns	18. Near misses
19. Delayed response to unexpected situations	20. Moving into wrong lane	21. Difficulty maintaining lane position	22. Confusion at exits	23. Ticketed moving violations or warnings	24. Getting lost in familiar places
25. Car accident	26. Failure to stop at stop sign or red light	27. Confusing the gas and brake pedals*	28. Stopping in traffic for no apparent reason*	29. Other signs:	* Stop driving immediately


CIRCLE OF SUPPORT
Health and Social Care - Professional Supports
Local Development Organisations
Neighbours and Community
Family and Friends
Person

Agreement with My Family About Driving

To My Family:

The time may come when I can no longer make the best decisions for the safety of others and myself. Therefore, in order to help my family make necessary decisions, this statement is an expression of my wishes and directions while I am still able to make these decisions.

I have discussed with my family my desire to drive as long as it is safe for me to do so.

When it is not reasonable for me to drive, I desire_____ (person's name) to tell me I can no longer drive.

I trust my family will take the necessary steps to prohibit my driving to ensure my safety and the safety of others while protecting my dignity.

Signed _____
Date_____

THE HARTFORD

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www.thehartford.com/lifetime

WE NEED TO TALK

This guidebook provides families with easy-to-use, practical information to help them plan ahead and initiate productive and caring conversations with older adults about driving safely.

Keeping Us Safe through Senior Care Authority

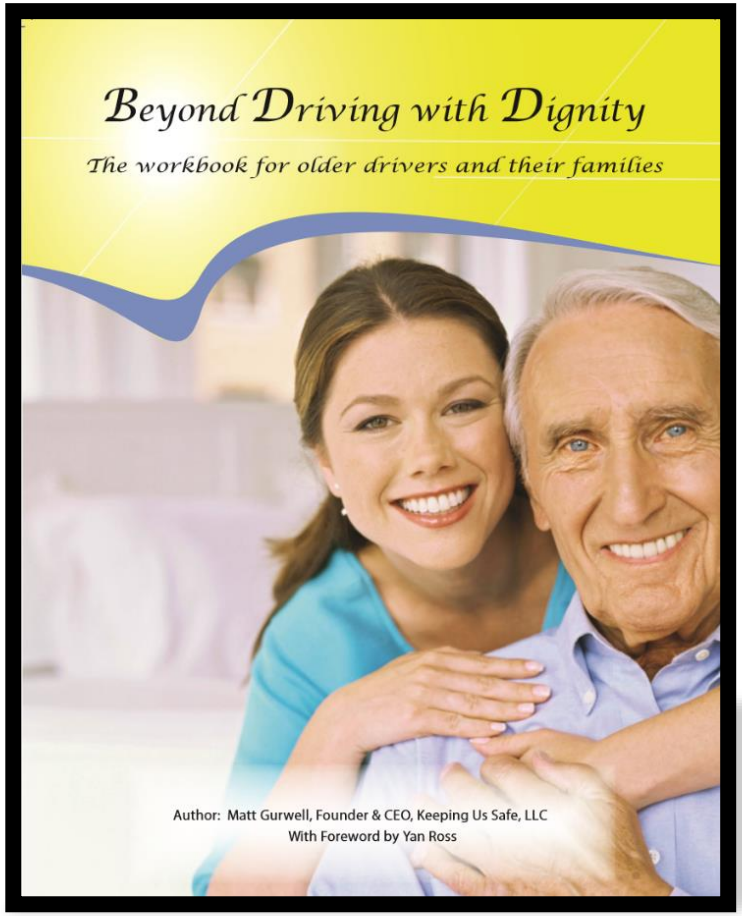
Keeping Us Safe has dedicated itself to improving the mortality rate of older drivers and drivers with certain disabilities. We will accomplish this by working one-on-one with the older driver, and by developing and delivering education programs to older drivers and their families, geriatric professionals, and the public in general. We will further enhance our service to others by forming meaningful and beneficial partnerships with members of the geriatric and highway safety communities.

Beyond Driving with Dignity;

The workbook for older drivers and their families

Senior Care Authority

www.seniorcareauthority.com



Senior Care Authority

Family Driving Agreement

Dear Family;

As I continue through the aging process, I realize there may come a day when the advantages of my continuing to drive are outweighed by the safety risk I pose not only to myself, but also to other motorists.

I want to continue driving for as long as is safely possible, but when my driving is no longer safe, I will trust: _____
(name of trusted friend or relative)

when he/she tells me that I need to discontinue driving, or to continue driving with certain restrictions.

I will maintain my integrity by listening to and accepting this individual's driving-related recommendations, thereby ensuring not only my safety, but also the safety of the motoring public.

Signed _____ Date _____
(your signature)

Signed _____ Date _____
(by person named above)

Witness _____ Date _____

Driver Rehabilitation Program

The Driver Evaluation and Rehabilitation Program at Pi Beta Phi Rehabilitation Institute evaluates driving potential and ability of people who have had injuries or conditions that could make driving unsafe. Examples include brain or spinal cord injury, stroke, amputation, low vision, dementia, or learning disabilities. Our program uses adaptive driving equipment to increase safety.

VANDERBILT HEALTH

Safety Tips and Resources for Drivers

Assessing Driving Ability

Refresh Your Driving Skills

www.aarp.org/safedriving

866-295-7274

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Thank you.

Questions & Answers