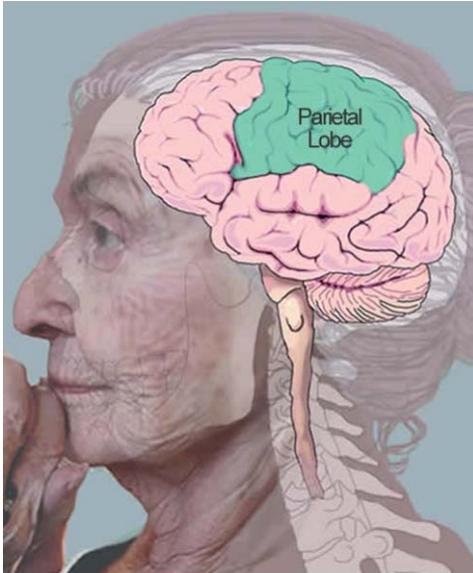


## The 7 A's of Dementia

### 4. Agnosia: Loss of Recognition



#### Deficits:

- loss of ability to recognize:
  - people (including self)
  - objects
  - sounds,despite intact sensory modalities (vision, touch, hearing)
- three types of Agnosia:
  - Visual (objects, faces, words)
  - Auditory (sounds)
  - Somatosensory (objects via touch)
- faces, objects, sounds, etc are perceived, but not recognized due to a disconnection between senses and memory
- leads to altered behaviours, interactions, and interpretations of others, objects, or sounds

#### Associated Behaviours:

- A loss of recognition of people in the reverse order that they came into the person's life (e.g. grandchildren are forgotten first)
- A belief that they are much younger than their actual age causing them to become confused at having an "older" spouse, or adult children that are the same age as they are
- Delusions that a family member or care provider is an imposter
- "Inappropriate" sexual behaviour resulting from deluded self-perception and misidentification of others
- Becoming disturbed by mirrors, especially when reflecting the person (and other caregivers) in their most personal space (e.g. bedroom/bathroom). The individual may not recognize self or other caregivers, so the perception is of a stranger(s) watching them undress, bathe, or toilet.
- The inappropriate use of objects, or forgetfulness of the purpose of the object (e.g. toothbrush, faucet, toilet)
- Defensive or protective reactions when care involves the use of "unfamiliar" objects (e.g. caregiver trying to brush teeth causes resistance)
- Impaired auditory recognition (e.g. a cat meowing may be thought to be a crying baby).

#### Effective Care Strategies for Agnosia:

- Remove or reverse mirrors
- Mimic the use of an object (such as toothbrush or face cloth) prior to handing it to the person or administering care
- Provide reassurance that the person in the environment is a family member or a care provider who is there appropriately.