



COMMUNITY
HEALTH CHARITIES

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Amy Kell of Madison is a caregiver to her husband, Steve, who was diagnosed with younger onset dementia. Amy states, "A dementia diagnosis changes everything. Unlike potentially treatable diseases such as cancer, dementia can feel more like being on death row. Each person's process is individual and largely unpredictable. For caregivers, it is mentally, physically and emotionally challenging to support your loved one as he or she declines.

"All doctors can really do is diagnose, prescribe (medications) and monitor. The family is left having to figure everything else out by themselves. You can feel that there is nowhere to turn to get the ongoing support you need for the journey. Fortunately, that support does exist. That's where the **Alzheimer's & Dementia Alliance of Wisconsin** comes in. Their four-week Crossing Bridges program is very comprehensive and provided us with more knowledge than the various doctors were able to offer."

Amy continues, "(At the Crossing Bridges group), participants are broken into two groups where dementia patients and caregivers meet in individual sessions. The dementia group always seemed to be laughing on the other side of the wall. In our caregiver group there were lots of tears, because we were with people who understood and could help. Nothing else is comparable. Most important for caregivers is that we learned not to be so hard on ourselves. As it turns out, we are not alone and isolated. There is a community of skilled people at the **Alzheimer's & Dementia Alliance** that are there to help, and these folks are a lifeline, plain and simple."