



The Vital Role Memory Plays in Older Driver Safety

By: David Stamberg, Certified Senior Advisor®, Certified Dementia Practitioner, Certified "Beyond Driving with Dignity Professional"

We've all done it; gotten ourselves lost while traveling to an unfamiliar area, or even losing our car in a crowded parking lot. Some of us (myself included) have even gotten lost while using a GPS. One has to wonder, how is that even possible? But for an older driver who finds his or herself getting lost in otherwise familiar areas, this decline in memory can be a very significant warning sign that danger may lay ahead.

Continued on next page

IN THIS ISSUE

The Vital Role Memory Plays in Older Driver Safety

Mindfulness

Sharing Circle

Resource Spotlight

Activity Center

Trivia

In the family setting, the role memory plays in older driver safety is often understated or even overlooked. When we discuss age-related diminished driving skills in older adults, we tend to focus on the physical attributes of safe driving (vision, reflexes, strength, flexibility, hearing, etc.), and may overlook the crucial role memory plays in keeping older drivers safe.

Older drivers have asked “As long as I’m still a good driver, so what if I get lost? At most, it might create an inconvenience, but it certainly doesn’t create a safety hazard.” Unfortunately, this philosophy can sometimes be the furthest thing from the truth.

Memory is part of a larger brain function known as executive functioning. Executive functioning has been referred to as the brain’s CEO, and its primary duty is to oversee such cognitive abilities as planning, concentrating and not becoming distracted, multi-tasking, estimating time, problem-

solving, making appropriate decisions, prioritizing information and of course, memory.

A significant decline in our memory can lead to disaster if we continue to drive without first making appropriate adjustments in our driving behavior and habits. Continuing to drive while ignoring noticeable memory decline can lead to tragedy, either through a car accident or by unknowingly becoming an excellent candidate for a victim of crime.

Working memory enables a mature driver to perform such functions as follow driving directions, rules and regulations, make good decisions while behind the wheel, and not getting lost. Memory is critically important to an older driver’s safety. If you have an aging loved-one that is getting lost driving to otherwise familiar locations, it may be time to give further consideration to the individual’s ability to remain safe as a driver.

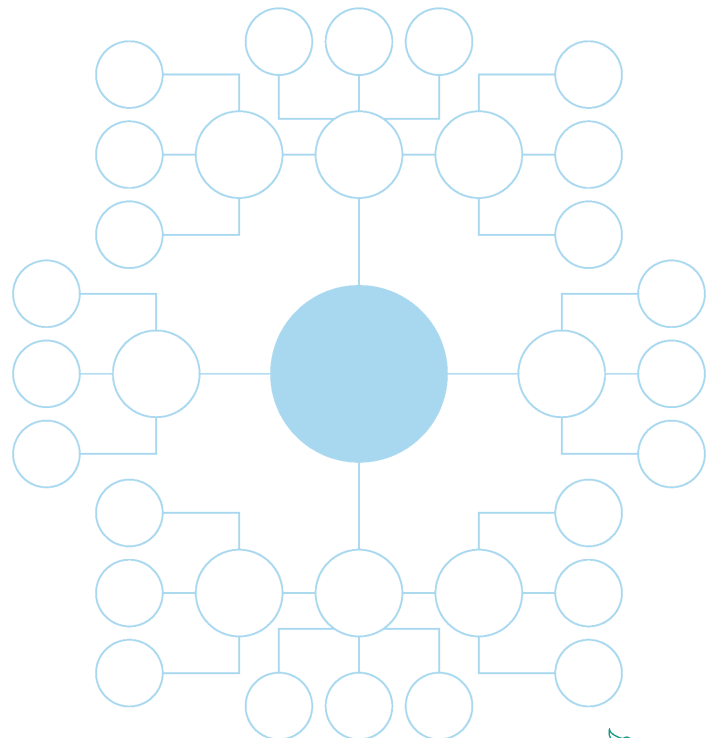
Senior Care Authority’s exclusive “Beyond Driving with Dignity” program is a valuable resource in helping determine if someone you know is at an elevated risk to be in a vehicle accident (www.beyonddrivingwithdignity.com).

Mindfulness: What is mind mapping?

Mind mapping is a creative tool that helps you organize and streamline your thoughts around a central idea, allowing you to connect concepts along the way. Applying this technique to personal projects and problems can help you break out of your usual way of thinking and solve stress-causing issues that arise here and there.

MIND MAP

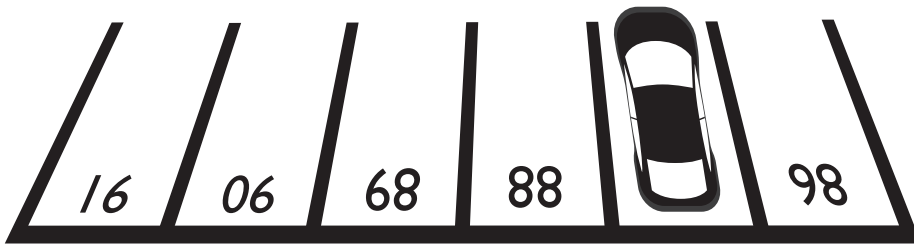
Instructions: Notice your current thoughts and identify a main theme or topic you are focused on. Take that topic and write it in the larger center circle. Moving outwards from the middle, begin filling the circles with related topics, question, ideas and worries you think of.



Activity Center

Brainteaser

What is the number of the parking spot containing the car?



Want more brainteasers?
https://www.ranker.com/list/brainteasers-adults-struggle-with/lowe-saddler?ref=mshare&source=pinterest&medium=p_share

Answer on back page.

Trivia Time!

What did the U.S. Postal Service add in 1963 that is part of every address today?

Answer on back page.



Sharing Circle

What is your favorite part of autumn?

I love the feelings of warmth and coziness that I get after decorating for fall, lighting a fall scented candle, and snuggling up with a blanket and a cup of tea watching the leaves come down.
– Stephanie



We want to hear from you for next month's issue!

What is your favorite present you have received or given?

Email your answer to Bridget Souza at bsouza@cafsnj.org or call 201-740-7011.

“The only person you are destined to become is the person you decide to be.”

–Ralph Waldo Emerson

Contact Us

To learn more, submit a response, or ask a question you can contact us at:

Bridget Souza: bsouza@cafsnj.org

Terrina Baldwin: tbaldwin@cafsnj.org

Celebrating Seniors Online

<https://www.tcad.org/celebratingseniors>

www.tcad.org  @TCADR  @TCADR

ACTIVITY ANSWER:

87 The parking spots are actually flipped upside down. Flipped, they read 86, __, 88, 89, 90, 91.

TRIVIA ANSWER:

zip codes

Resource Spotlight

SCSEP is a program that provides paid training and free job placement services specific to individuals whom are 55 and older.

Participants have the opportunity to gain experience and skills needed to stay active, supplement their income and contribute to their communities while the workforce gains highly motivated, reliable workers with useful skills and valuable life experiences.

Qualifications- most in need of three of the following barriers:

- **Be 55 years of age or older**
- **Low Literacy skills (education less than 12th grade)**
- **Veteran (or eligible spouse)**
- **Homeless or at risk of homelessness**
- **Documented Disability**
- **Reside in a rural area (RUCA)**
- **Registered and used local one-stop service, but did not find employment**
- **Low employment prospects**
- **Severe disability**
- **Frail**
- **Old enough to receive SS, but do not have enough credit**
- **Live in an area with persistent unemployment**

If you are interested in participating in the SCSEP Program, please email Suzy Park at spark@nj.easterseals.com or call or text: 201-329-5637

If you or a loved one needs help accessing addiction services and support...

Call or Text: 201-589-2976

Confidential hotline services available 24/7 to serve Bergen County

 **THE CENTER**
FOR ALCOHOL AND DRUG RESOURCES
A Program of Children's Aid and Family Services