Caregiving for Dementia Challenge

Caregiver Personas
Who are we designing for?

Given the complexity and depth of this Challenge, we will be guiding our community to focus on (5) specific personas as we design solutions. These personas represent variations of our end user—the family caregiver—but they are certainly not an exhaustive illustration of the different types of users that innovations may support or touch.
Derrick works full-time for a software company. He recently relocated to be closer to his father, who was just diagnosed with early-stage dementia. Before his father’s diagnosis, Derrick noticed gradual changes in his father’s behavior, like forgetting where he put his keys or experiencing confusion while driving. He now recognizes these behaviors as signs of his father’s dementia, and not normal aging. Derrick worries about his dad, who lives alone in the same house he grew up in. He has so many questions, but doesn’t know where to turn for answers.

How might we support caregivers like Derrick?
Healthcare professional and care partner

Tanya is a geriatric nurse who works full-time in large public hospital and is also caring for elderly aunt with dementia who lives 3 hours away. Since Tanya lives far away from her aunt, she constantly worries about her day-to-day life and health needs. As a healthcare professional who specializes in geriatric care, Tanya knows it is only a matter of time before her aunt’s dementia progresses to the next stage, and she wants to be prepared. She is interested in creating long-term solutions, drawing from her work and personal experiences, to better care for her aunt in the future.

How might we support caregivers like Tanya?

Opportunity Area: Planning Ahead
College student caring for a grandmother

Yessenia is a 20-year old community college student who cares for her elderly grandmother with dementia. She lives at home with her mother, father, and younger siblings, as well as her grandmother. When Yessenia was younger, her grandmother was her primary caregiver, but now the roles are reversed. Yessenia is responsible for taking her grandmother to the doctor and refilling her prescriptions. She shares a special bond with her grandmother, but lately she has been having trouble communicating with her. Yessenia is looking for a way to connect with her grandmother in a meaningful way.

How might we support caregivers like Yessenia?
Retired caregiver caring for a spouse

Lee is a retired man, age 65, who lives at home with his wife who has mid-stage dementia. When his wife developed dementia, he felt like he had no choice but to take on the caregiving responsibility. Watching his wife lose her memory is disorienting for the both of them, and more and more he feels like he has no control over the situation. He loves his wife very much, but at times, being a full-time caregiver with no break leaves him feeling depressed and socially isolated. Lee does not have a good support system or other family members who understand the challenges in caregiving.

How might we support caregivers like Lee?
Full-time parent and caregiver

Helen is a stay-at-home mom who cares for her four young children and her mother with dementia, who recently moved into the guest bedroom. Her mother’s condition has been slowly getting worse. Routine activities like bathing are especially difficult because Helen’s mother will refuse to get in the tub and physically resists Helen’s attempts to bathe her. Helen notices that her mother is most disoriented in the afternoon. More than once, Helen’s mother has wandered outside the home. Between caring for her family and managing her mother’s behaviors, Helen has her hands full.

How might we support caregivers like Helen?

Helen, age 42

Opportunity Area: Managing Behaviors