



Frequently Asked Questions and Suggested Answers

Memory screenings may raise several questions from individuals undergoing the screening as well as from accompanying caregivers, family members, friends, or even other healthcare professionals. This sheet offers some general suggestions on handling commonly asked questions and concerns.

Does this memory screening provide a diagnosis?

Memory screenings are preliminary and basic. Emphasize to participants and any accompanying parties that this is only a screening, ***not*** a diagnosis. A comprehensive assessment by their primary care physician or specialist is necessary to identify the cause of memory problems.

How are memory screenings useful?

Memory screenings are helpful in detecting significant memory impairment, but they are not sensitive enough to detect minor problems or diagnose an illness. If a participant's score on the screening indicates that there may be a memory problem, explain that additional assessment tools, such as a complete medical history, a physical exam, neuropsychological tests, lab tests and brain imaging scans, may be used by a physician to provide an accurate diagnosis.

How are scores interpreted?

Below threshold scores suggest the need for further assessment. It is important to encourage both participants whose scores are below the normal range *and* participants with normal scores but who still have concerns to have a follow-up consultation with their primary care physician or specialist.

What should the "next steps" be?

Participants with below normal scores and/or ongoing concerns should pursue a complete medical examination with their primary care physician or specialist. With the permission of the participant, suggest to accompanying family members that they should pursue further evaluation. All participants should receive a completed copy of the "Participant Departure Packet" and be encouraged to incorporate memory screenings into their regular wellness check-ups. Participants with questions or concerns regarding the screening should call AFA's Helpline at 866-232-8484 to talk with a licensed social worker.

What causes memory impairment?

Participants should schedule an appointment with their primary care physician or specialist to address any questions or concerns about memory impairment. A number of problems can cause memory impairment. Some memory problems can be readily treated, such as those caused by vitamin deficiency or thyroid problems. Other memory problems might result from causes that are currently not reversible.

Where can I go for more information and resources?

The Alzheimer's Foundation of America has licensed social workers to address any additional questions or concerns via a toll-free helpline: 866-232-8484. Encourage participants to visit our websites: www.nationalmemoryscreening.org and www.alzprevention.org.