Wendy Williams Diagnosed With Dementia

After being diagnosed with frontotemporal dementia and primary progressive aphasia, Williams "is still able to do many things for herself."

February 27, 2024 By Laura Schmidt

Wendy Williams has been diagnosed with a form of dementia, her care team announced last week via news release.

Last year, after undergoing medical testing, the 59-year-old former talk show host was diagnosed with frontotemporal dementia (FTD) and primary progressive aphasia (PPA). The conditions "have already presented significant hurdles in Wendy's life," according to the statement.

FTD, a progressive disorder impacting cognitive functions and behavior, can cause emotional problems, trouble communicating, unusual behavior and difficulty working and walking, according to the National Institute on Aging.

More than half of people diagnosed with FTD are between 45 and 64 years old. It's estimated that about 50,000 to 60,000 Americans have FTD, but it's likely underdiagnosed, according to the Alzheimer's Association.

FTD is often accompanied by PPA, a condition that slowly damages parts of the brain that control speech and language and may cause difficulty speaking, understanding conversations and naming objects. Actor Bruce Willis has the same neurodegenerative diseases.

"Wendy is still able to do many things for herself," her team said. "Most importantly, she maintains her trademark sense of humor and is receiving the care she requires to make sure she is protected and that her needs are addressed."

Where Is Wendy Williams?, a Lifetime series detailing Williams' struggles with her health—including a decades-old Graves' disease diagnosis—premiered shortly after news of her diagnosis was made public.

"The Alzheimer's Foundation of America (AFA) sends our prayers and support to Wendy Williams and her family on the announcement of her diagnosis of frontotemporal dementia (FTD) and primary progressive aphasia," said AFA president and CEO Charles J. Fuschillo Jr. in a statement.

“Her decision to publicly disclose her diagnosis will help raise awareness, reduce stigma, and show support for the many others living with dementia-related illnesses. We are grateful for her courage, transparency, and efforts to heightening understanding and compassion for all those living with a form of dementia.”

Williams told People that she feels “immense gratitude for the love and kind words” she has received since her health status announced.

“Let me say, Wow! Your response has been overwhelming,” she said. “The messages shared with me have touched me, reminding me of the power of unity and the need for compassion.”

“I hope that others with FTD may benefit from my story,” Williams added. ”I continue to need personal space and peace to thrive. Please just know that your positivity and encouragement are deeply appreciated."

To read more, click #Dementia or #Cognitive Function. There, you’ll find headlines such as “New Alzheimer’s Drug Raises Hopes — Along With Questions,” “Let’s Have an Honest Conversation About What to Expect as You Age” and “Why the Next Big Hope for Alzheimer’s Might Not Help Most Black Patients.”

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