

## **Seniors Early Warning Signs Of Cognitive Decline<sup>1</sup>**



While financial decision-making capabilities are thought to peak in one's fifties, it can be helpful to recognize some of the signs of cognitive decline.

- 1. Slower to complete financial tasks, due to a 16% decrease in cognition.**  
They “miss” information when scanning documents visually.  
Examples: paying bills, keeping a check register, doing annual income taxes.
- 2. Missing key details in documents,** such as an overdue bill, paying a bill twice, or details on bank statements.
- 3. Mistakes in everyday arithmetic,** especially when doing two calculations at one time.  
Example: calculating restaurant tips while dividing the check between others present.
- 4. Decreased comprehension of financial concepts,** like minimal balances required or medical deductibles.
- 5. Less attentive to recognizing risks in financial matters,** focusing instead on potential benefits.

The Consumer Finance Protection Bureau suggests selecting a few people you trust, and giving that list to your investment professional. You could direct that an emergency contact be called if your investment professional sees that you are confused and acting out of character, placing you at risk for financial fraud or exploitation.<sup>2</sup>

An alternative could be to formalize a Power Of Attorney to be your “agent” if you are *physically* incapacitated for any reason in the future and can no longer handle your money. You can decide under what specific circumstances the Power of Attorney goes into effect, and what powers your agent will have over your finances.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Dr. Daniel Marsen, neuropsychiatrist and Director of the Alzheimer's Disease Center at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), and speaker at the 2015 North American Securities Administrators Association Conference for Investor Education on Diminished Capacity.

<sup>2</sup>[http://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/201505\\_cfpb\\_consumer-advisory-and-investor-bulletin-planning-for-diminished-capacity-and-illness.pdf](http://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/201505_cfpb_consumer-advisory-and-investor-bulletin-planning-for-diminished-capacity-and-illness.pdf) - Consumer Finance Protection Bureau.