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Community Resources**

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## **Review: “I’m Still Here” by Vrenia Ivonoffski**

*By: Sana Shahram, Writer, Supporting Caregivers Across the Lifespan Project.*

DVD of the play *I’m Still Here* is written by Vrenia Ivonoffski, and is based on findings from research conducted with people living with Alzheimer’s disease or a related dementia and daughters whose mothers were diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease.

This insightful and powerful DVD examines questions about the effects of Alzheimer’s disease on a person’s identity and relationships. It provides the often overlooked perspective from the actual person with the disease, with the characters in the play with dementia repeatedly expressing that they feel they are not being listened to. The characters explore the frustration associated with having all of their emotions, actions and thoughts suddenly deemed demented post-diagnosis. Indeed, the play seems to suggest that the stigma and suspension of personal freedom associated with dementia often out-paces the progression of the actual disease. The play also offers the balancing view of family caregivers and their attempt to provide the best and most suitable care for their loved ones while also dealing with the emotional impacts of the disease. Both perspectives offer a plethora of thought-provoking and conversation-initiating topics for both caregivers and people living with Alzheimer’s disease or a related dementia.

A ‘must see’ play for those newly diagnosed with dementia, their families and care providers alike, *I’m Still Here* is at once educational and uplifting. The play suggests that although Alzheimer’s disease may alter parts of the person that it affects, it does not completely take them away; they’re *still here*.

*A copy of the DVD “I’m Still Here” is available at the West Vancouver Memorial Library. The DVD is also available for purchase at [www.marep.uwaterloo.ca/uacts/still.html](http://www.marep.uwaterloo.ca/uacts/still.html).*