

Federal Judicial Center  
Dementia and the Law: Conclusion  
Judge Jed S. Rakoff  
March 2024

Judge Rakoff: Dementia changes the way people understand the world around them and affects cognition in different ways. Dementia already affects millions of people. As humans are able to live longer, more people are likely to experience issues related to dementia.

In this program, I hope you have discovered new medical information about dementia, including its definition, symptoms, causes, and how it might be diagnosed. I also hope that you have learned new ways that dementia might affect behaviors before the courts and the types of cases that judges are likely to see.

Dementia is not only related to competency. Instead, issues surrounding dementia can affect a wide range of civil and criminal proceedings in both federal and state courts. Although those with dementia are not more likely to commit crimes, the courts need to be prepared to respond to the scientific and legal issues presented by dementia.

Overall, I hope that this program has provided you with the information you need to better understand the medical and legal aspects of dementia. Thank you for participating.

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