Care Partner Information

Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementia Caregiving Tips

Choosing Long-Term Care

The time may come when you need outside help to care for the person with dementia. You might think about getting help in the home or having the person go to adult day care. Or, you might want to move the person into a residential care setting like assisted living, a group home, nursing home, or life-care community.

There are many choices. Knowing the steps to take, questions to ask, and information you need makes it easier to make the best choice. The table below shows the three key steps.

How to Choose Long-Term Care - 3 Key Steps	
Step 1	Make a list of care needs for the person with dementia. What type of help do you and the person with dementia need? For example, is help needed with bathing, dressing, preparing meals, eating, and/or medical needs?
Step 2	Decide where the care should be: home, community center, or residential setting? Would someone coming into the home to help be enough? Could the person with dementia go to adult day care and come home at night? Or, does the person need to move out of the home and live somewhere else?
Step 3	Visit several places before deciding. Pick several organizations or care settings to visit before making a decision. You can find the names of in-home care agencies, adult day care centers, and residential centers through your phone book, on the internet, or by calling your local Alzheimer's Association or Area Agency on Aging. Also ask friends, family, and health care providers for recommendations.

Be Ready With Questions

When you make visits, be ready with questions. The first question is to ask if they serve people with dementia. Some organizations and residential settings do that, but some don't. If they do, ask if they can deal with the care needs you listed in Step 1.

This Care Partner Information page is part of a series on caregiving tips. They are written to help family and community caregivers, direct care workers and community health representatives care for someone with Alzheimer's disease or other types of dementia. Available in English and Spanish at www.aging.arizona.edu





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Also ask how long they have been providing services and how they hire and train staff. Do they do background checks on staff? Ask how much they charge. Find out the cost of basic services and ask if there are extra costs. Also ask the questions listed in the tables below.

Questions for In-Home Care Agencies and Community Centers

- Is care available at the times you need it?
- Do they require minimum number of hours of care?
- Are they licensed by the state? Some services must be licensed, while others are not.
- For in-home care, can you expect that the same person will come to the home each time? And, what happens if the person doesn't show up?

Questions for Residential Care

- How many residents are there?
- How many staff are there for the residents?
- How many residents does each staff member care for?
- What activities are offered for residents?
- What happens if there is a medical emergency?
- Are families called if there is a problem?
- Is there a special unit for people with dementia?
- Are there regular meal and snack times?

After visiting and asking all the questions, the final, and most important question is to ask yourself if you feel comfortable with them. Did the place feel warm and inviting? How did it smell? In community centers and residential care, did the people seem happy and well cared for? Trust your instincts. If you don't feel okay about them, they are not the right choice.

How to Pay?

Long-Term Care is expensive. Long-term care insurance, Veteran's Benefits, and Medicaid may only pay for some costs and this varies by state. Medicare does not pay except after a hospital stay when skilled nursing is needed. Some communities may have state or local support to help with payment. Check with your local Alzheimer's Association Chapter or area Agency on Aging to learn more.

Useful Websites

Alzheimer's Association Community Resource Finder: http://www.communityresourcefinder.org/

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