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A Place for Caregivers

Stories + Advice for and by caregivers of people with Alzheimer's or dementia.

The New Face of Memory Care in Assisted Living Communities

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The New Face of Memory Care in Assisted Living Communities

Thinking about memory care is more important now than ever before as the number of people being diagnosed with Alzheimer’s or dementia increases at a frightening rate. The Alzheimer’s Association predicts the number of people aged 65 and older with Alzheimer’s disease could increase from today’s 5 million to 13.8 million by 2050 “barring the development of medical breakthroughs to prevent, slow or stop the disease.”

*“With a disease that’s here to stay for some time, our national efforts must ignite attention on improving the quality of life for those living with the disease and their families. This means a coordinated strategy that values, supports and encourages non-drug approaches and subsequent research with the same devotion as drug research,” Angela Lunda, Mayo Clinic health education outreach coordinator, **says in her Alzheimer’s blog.***

As the need for memory care in the United States, and all over the world, grows, facilities will have to find new ways to accommodate this growing population. Many facilities are realizing care strategies for a person with Alzheimer’s or dementia need to be different from other residents, and have started putting new practices into place.

Getting Family Members More Involved



The Alzheimer's Caregiver | Infographic



CNN's World's Untold Stories: Dementia Village



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The Alzheimer's Caregiver | Infographic wp.me/p2DMRd-7u

A person moving into assisted living or memory care is not the only person who has to adjust to their new life. There are many good reasons to put a family member in assisted living, but that doesn't mean it's an easy thing to do. Especially when you have been the primary caregiver for this person. **Read our story about moving in here.** Many directors are realizing how important it is to involve families and check in on them just as the families want to check in with their loved ones.

Large memory care companies, such as Emeritus, are increasing family involvement to better educate family members on communicating with their loved ones with Alzheimer's, and put them in more situations to be able to connect with other families going through similar situations. Emeritus's website explains: "Through our family-to-family connections, we offer the opportunity for you to share and learn from other families experiencing similar situations, through our Alzheimer's and Dementia support groups, family gatherings and meetings." Educating families and allowing for them to connect with other families is just one way to enrich the lives of everybody involved.

Placing More Importance on Move-In

The first weeks someone lives in a new place can be scary for anyone, but especially for someone with Alzheimer's because they might not know why they are in an unfamiliar place. Having caregivers that understand their residents likes and dislikes, and a little about their past, can help ease anxiety as they



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guide residents into familiar and enjoyable activities.

Learning all these things about a person usually takes some time. All relationships take time to grow, but when you are caring for some with Alzheimer's, it can greatly benefit you both to expedite this process so that you are able to better understand the person in your care. It is for this reason that many memory care facilities are placing greater importance on communicating with family members and friends when moving someone into memory care.

Using Technology to Stay Connected

Although technology is a huge part of everyday life, it doesn't play as big of a role in memory care mostly because of the generation of people in assisted living at this time. Even if residents aren't completely comfortable using technology on their own, it can still be used to keep families connected and involved. Staff members in many care facilities email updates to family members along with photos of their loved ones engaging in different activities throughout the week. Some communities even use Skype to connect residents and family members who are too far away to visit regularly.

Aside from using technology to stay connected, it can play a very important role in keeping people safe and new technologies are being created for this purpose all the time. The Alzheimer's Society in the UK offer a large list of **assistive technologies for people with Alzheimer's disease.** The term 'assistive technology' refers to 'any device or system that allows an individual to perform a task that they would

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otherwise be unable to do, or increases the ease and safety with which the task can be performed' (Royal Commission on Long Term Care, 1999). You can buy some of these **safety products at Best Alzheimer's Products.**

These are just a few things changes that are happening in Memory Care Facilities. What are some things your facility is doing to change the face of Memory Care? Do you have ideas that you would like to see come to life?

Resources / Bibliography

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