



Caring for someone who has dementia is hard

By Ellen Waldman

February 10, 2021

It just might be true that the hardest task people have to address is caring for someone with dementia. We're not taught how to do this, and not knowing what to do causes all sort of hardships for too many people. Even with the best intentions and motivations to be available for those we know and love, nothing actually prepares us for this. It requires a skill set that's more than just common good-heartedness and basic good sense. It requires a whole new way of understanding and communicating with this person, to start with. It often ends with finding a way to not lose your own health in the midst of the unrelenting care that's often required.

At some point, and perhaps even sooner than later, most people in this situation fare better with care being provided by professionals in the appropriate environment. This means moving someone out of a familiar home situation into a memory care community.

One of the most difficult questions to answer is this: How do I know when it's time to place someone diagnosed with dementia into a memory care community? Another challenge is answering the question, how can I do this with the best possible results? There are really no perfect answers to either of these questions, but there are ways to make this transition less difficult and result in better outcomes.

Just this month, someone said quite adamantly that she would never put her dad into a memory care facility. He himself had told her never to do this. However, in the majority of cases, this transition needs to be seriously considered at some point. As in other preparations for aging adults, realistically thinking this through following a diagnosis of dementia is very important.

Together with a colleague, I'm offering a series of online presentations on this very topic. The co-host is Lori Stanton, who holds a master of arts degree in social gerontology and advocacy. She is as well-versed and trained as you can be on the topic of dementia. These sessions are designed to be a broad overview of when to place someone into a memory care community and how best to accomplish this often-challenging transition. You are invited to explore these topics in a free, 3-part virtual educational forum using Zoom. Here are the details.

"Moving to Memory Care: When it's time and How to do this"

Session 1: How Do I Know When it's Time to Place My Person in Memory Care?

February 16, 2021, 11:00 AM-12 Noon

Session 2: 50+ Tips on Successfully Transitioning to Memory Care

February 23, 2021, 11:00 AM-12 Noon

Session 3: How We Made this Transition Work

March 2, 2021, 11:00 AM-12 Noon

This last session will be presented with a panel of family members who have placed someone they love into a community to receive this care.

If you're interested in attending this seminar, please send me an email and I will add your name to the list.

There's probably at least twenty more hours of information that we could share on this topic. Please know that this is not even close to the final word on what to do or how to do it. But it's a very good place to begin this process.

As for the daughter I mentioned above, here's how that resolved. After our conversation, she was able to see the mutual benefits if her dad was not living at home much longer. She was now prepared to look into placing him in a memory care community. It may not be the answer for everyone, but it's a real lifesaver for many. No one is born an expert on this topic. Having a caring heart, good motivations and ethical intentions might not be enough to meet the needs of your person. Trust your gut, get more information on this topic, and start there.