

Practical Tips for the Caregiver

Dawn DeStefani

ActivCare Executive Director





Maintaining a Safe Home Environment

The Environment

- Lighting
- Noise
- The amount of people
- Perception of space
- Temperature



Tips to Prevent Falls

- Pay attention to patterns
- Clear walkways, remove throw rugs and coffee tables
- Ensure there is proper lighting



The Value of Structure and Routine

- We all need a schedule
- We all need a stimulation
- We all need a purpose
- Understand when they are at their best. Use that time of the day to schedule certain activities like doctor's appointments or daily exercise.





Practical Tips for the Caregiver

Useful Tools

- Use a **whiteboard** to lay out the plan.
- Keep a **journal** to refer to after a period of time, this is especially helpful for doctor's appointments.
- Then, predict the routine and anticipate how to avoid it. This will help with reducing their anxiety and your stress.

Example: Restlessness and irritability every evening after dinner while you wash the dishes. Plan a long walk or put on his favorite music program right at the end of dinner to avoid this and wash the dishes later.



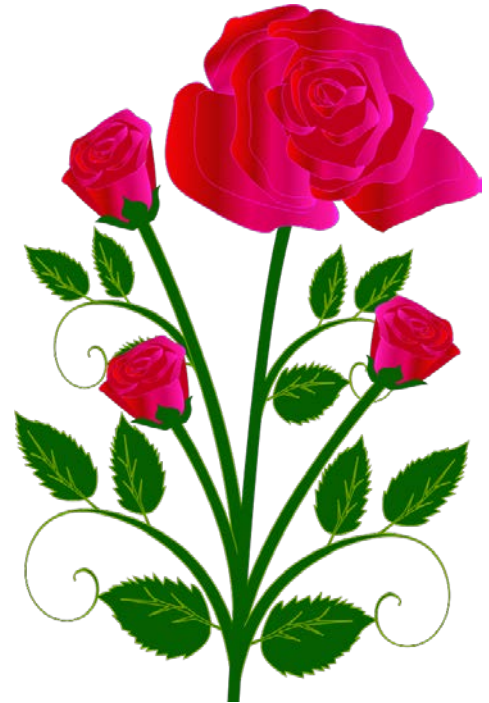
Communication

- Provide the answers
- Provide clear and simple instructions
- Provide plenty of time and repeat if necessary
- Reassure and redirect



Reducing Caregiver Stress

- Stop and smell the roses...Literally! Schedule the time to be alone and together.
- Use resources available by creating a whole team to support you.
- Join a support group
- Enlist family and friends to help



Reducing Caregiver Stress

- Keep active and involved.
- Use your skills and give them the opportunity to use theirs for as long as possible.
- If you don't use it, you lose it!
- Tips to maintain skills and abilities:
 - 1 - At their level
 - 2 - Set up for success
 - 3 - Accomplishment



**Use It
or
Lose It**

How to Augment Your Care

- **Adult Day Care Programs**
- **Private Duty Care**
- **Residential Care Communities**

Day Care value and options

Adult Day Care

- Provides a brief respite for family caregivers
- May be used 2 to 5 days a week
- Great for establishing a routine and providing meaningful stimulation during day hours

Cost = \$70 to \$80/day

Private Duty Care at Home

Private Duty Agency

- Provides private duty caregivers (not nurses)
- Request specialization with dementia and elderly
 - Is agency licensed, bonded and provides worker's compensation insurance?
 - Must follow CA labor standards for overtime rules, break time, lunch breaks, etc.

Cost = \$20 to \$24/hr.

Avg cost = \$3,600 per month (8 hrs/day x 5 days/wk)

Community Care Options

- Skilled Nursing (Nursing Home)
- Assisted Living
- Memory Care

Community Care Options

Assisted Living

- Apartment living with supportive care
- Only appropriate at early stages of Alzheimer's or MCI

Not Appropriate

- When resident no longer self-initiates or engages
- If wandering is a risk and has been occurred

Board & Care homes to Multi-level Retirement campuses

Cost = Monthly from \$3,000 - \$10,000+

(Make sure all services are included in pricing)

Community Care Options

Memory Care Community

- Designed for residents with dementia and memory loss
- Staff receives a higher level of training and support
- Nurses on staff to evaluate/assess when there is a change of condition
 - ✓ Verify an increased staff-to-resident ratio to meet residents' needs
- Physical plant is designed to be safe and secure to prevent wandering and resident injuries

Cost = Monthly from \$4,000 - \$12,000+

Avg Cost = \$6,000/mo.

When is it time to place?

Know the Warning Signs:

- Caregiver Burnout
- Unsafe Environment
- Erratic Behavior

Warning Signs: Caregiver Burnout

Physical Health

- Caregiver's health begins to decline
- Risks of injury arises: lifting, transferring, combativeness, violence

Emotional Toll

- Resentment and anger are present all the time
- Feelings of hopelessness, chronic fatigue and depression become routine

Warning Signs: Environment

- The current living environment and the surroundings are no longer safe for the person with dementia:
 - **Stairs**
 - **Gas stoves/open flames**
 - **Trip hazards**
 - **Exit seeking/gates/elopement**
- Days and nights confused

Warning Signs: Delusions

- Profound memory loss and hallucinations
- No longer recognize spouse/family members
- Frightened by living in a home
- Increased paranoia or combativeness

Online Resources

- State of California website for Home Care - <https://secure.dss.ca.gov/CareFacilitySearch>
- Alzheimer's Orange County – (949) 955-9000
alzoc.org
- Family Caregiver Resource Center - (800) 543-8312
caregiveroc.org
- New Lifestyles – newlifestyles.com
- ActivCare Communities – 888-636-5677
activcareliving.com

You're braver
than you believe,
stronger than you
seem, and smarter
than you think.

Winnie the Pooh



thewanderingreader.tumblr