

# Practical Tips for the Caregiver

**Dawn DeStefani**

ActivCare Executive Director





# Practical Tips for the Caregiver

# 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.



# 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.



# Engage



- Turn chores into Activities
- Allow them to do as much as they can
- Set them up for success at their level
- Music, children, art, pets, ball toss, walking are all good examples



# 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:

- Unsafe Environment
- Erratic Behavior
- Caregiver Burnout

# 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

# Warning Signs: Caregiver Burnout

## Physical Health

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

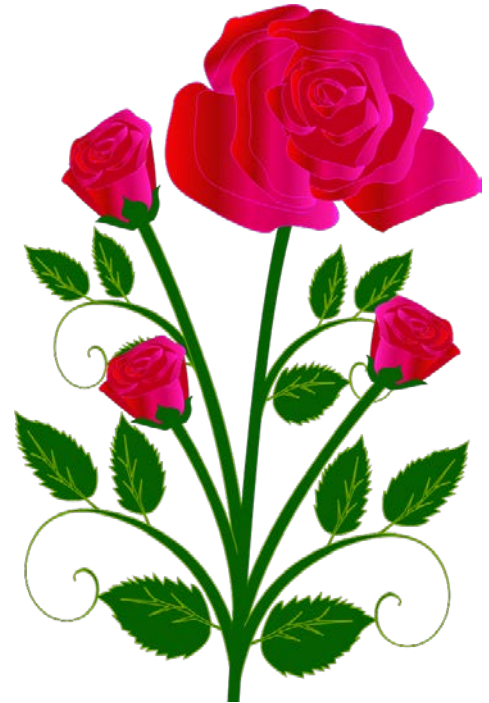
## Emotional Toll

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



# 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



# Online Resources

**State of California  
website for Home Care**

[https://secure.dss.ca.gov/  
CareFacilitySearch](https://secure.dss.ca.gov/CareFacilitySearch)

**Southern Caregiver  
Resource Center**

[caregivercenter.org](http://caregivercenter.org)

(858) 268-4432

**New Lifestyles Directory**

[www.newlifestyles.com](http://www.newlifestyles.com)

**Alzheimer's San Diego**

[alzsd.org](http://alzsd.org)

(858) 492-4400

**ActivCare Communities**

[activcareliving.com](http://activcareliving.com)

888-636-5677

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

Winnie the Pooh



[thewanderingreader.tumblr](http://thewanderingreader.tumblr)