

MAKING THE DECISION TO MOVE

Some people in the early stages of memory loss recognize their need for more assistance with personal care and activities. However, most people with memory problems do not initiate a move or move voluntarily. Often, their insight into their own behavior and needs has been impaired. This is a common result of the brain damage caused by diseases such as Alzheimer's disease, small strokes, or similar illnesses.

Thus, it is usually the family of the person with memory problems who will recognize the need to move, find a place, and make the final decision to move.

Your decision of when your relative might move depends on your personal situation. Although there are no magic signs to tell you "this is the right time," many caregivers move their loved one to a residential care home for one or more of the following reasons:

- ♣ The amount of supervision and assistance needed by the relative with memory loss is too exhausting for the caregiver.
- ♣ Family members are not able to provide the necessary level of care due to family disagreements or geographic distances.
- ♣ The person with memory loss is no longer safe in her current residence.
- ♣ The caregiver is unable to keep up with both family and work responsibilities.
- ♣ Emergency and crisis situations for the caregiver or the person with memory loss have arisen.
- ♣ Illness or injury to the person with memory loss.
- ♣ The current level of services is not enough, is too expensive, or is too difficult to arrange and sustain.
- ♣ The person with memory loss no longer recognizes her home or family.

If you and your family are having one or more of these experiences, it may be time to start

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investigating other care options, including residential care homes. Even if none of these things is happening in your family, advance planning is recommended in order to give you the widest range of alternatives. Many families find that selecting a place gives them peace of mind, even though they may not need it for a long time. Of course, not all families are able to plan ahead for various reasons.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES TO MOVING

Because this is such a hard decision, you may find it helpful to sort through the pros and cons of staying home versus moving your relative to residential care. We have listed below some of the common arguments we have heard and seen:

Advantages of staying home

- 🌿 My relative remains in a familiar environment.
- 🌿 My relative doesn't want to move.
- 🌿 Our family has more control over supervision and care.
- 🌿 Our family feels they can provide superior care.
- 🌿 Our family is honoring promises made.
- 🌿 It may be less expensive.
- 🌿 There is continued companionship for the caregiver.
- 🌿 My family member enjoys caregiving.

Disadvantages of staying home

- 🌿 Providing 24 hour care can be exhausting, sometimes impossible.
- 🌿 It may be too expensive to keep her at home.
- 🌿 It can be very difficult to get adequate care at home.
- 🌿 Our family may have too many competing demands, such as children, jobs, etc.
- 🌿 No one in our family is available to provide or monitor the care.
- 🌿 Our family may not be psychologically or

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physically able to cope with the demands of caregiving.

- ♻️ My relative may have behavior problems that are too difficult to manage at home.
- ♻️ The physical environment of our home may not be appropriate or safe for our relative in later stages.

Advantages to moving to residential care

- ♻️ By moving earlier in the disease process, my relative may be able to make friends with other residents and staff, enjoy activities, and adapt to the environment.
- ♻️ There is 24 hour supervision available.
- ♻️ Social and recreational activities are provided.
- ♻️ My family can share the care with staff.
- ♻️ The staff may be able to cope with some behaviors more easily.
- ♻️ My relationship with my relative may improve since I am no longer providing care.

Disadvantages to moving to residential care

- ♻️ My relative is in an unfamiliar environment.
- ♻️ The opportunity for doing some activities may not be present.
- ♻️ They may not provide the standard of care that my family expects.
- ♻️ The schedule or routines may not fit with that of my relative.
- ♻️ My family may be uncomfortable with other residents.
- ♻️ My relative may be more confused and disoriented during the initial weeks.
- ♻️ My relative's mood may be affected by the relocation.

If you are struggling with this decision, you may find it helpful to write your own list of the advantages and disadvantages of each alternative. Writing this down sometimes helps clarify thinking.

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