

When is it Time to Place?

Navigating through the decision process

Francia Smith, MBA, CDP

Certified Dementia Practitioner & Regional Manager

Arden Courts Memory Care Communities

Dementia

- ▶ What is dementia?
 - **Dementia is not a specific disease.**
 - overall term that describes a wide range of symptoms
 - associated with a decline in memory or other thinking skills
 - reduces a person's ability to perform everyday activities.
- ▶ While symptoms of dementia can vary greatly, at least two of the following core mental functions must be significantly impaired
 - Memory
 - Communication and language
 - Ability to focus and pay attention
 - Reasoning and judgment
 - Visual perception

Warning Signs

- ▶ Warning signs of dementia are gradual
 - Short term memory loss
 - Difficulty performing familiar tasks
 - Problems with language
 - Disorientation to time and place
 - Poor or decreased judgment
 - Problems with abstract thinking
 - Misplacing things in unusual places
 - Changes in mood and behavior
 - Changes in personality
 - Loss of initiative

When Do I Plan for Placement?

- ▶ Dementia is progressive disease
 - There will be a slow decline in cognitive and physical abilities
- ▶ When you may begin to feel your loved one has more specialized needs that are not being met.
 - investigate whether your loved one could benefit from memory care or specialized community

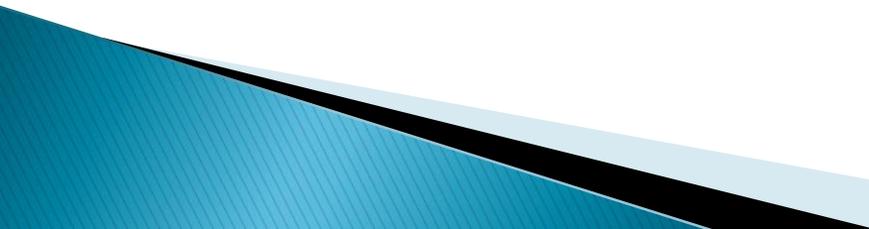
10 Signs it Is Time to Consider Placement

- ▶ 1. Safety: You worry about your loved one all the time
 - #1 family concern with a loved one with cognitive impairments is their physical safety
 - Memory Loss
 - Confusion
 - Wandering
 - Agitation
 - Anything thing that could lead them into a danger for themselves or others

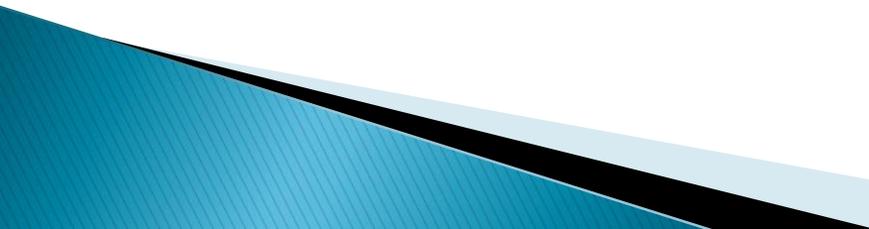
Safety–Red Flags

- ▶ Ask yourself how often each day you worry about your loved one, check on them, or make a call regarding their safety or whereabouts.
 - Has your loved one:
 - had a fall?
 - had a driving accident?
 - suffered an unexplained injury?
 - Wandered out of the house?

2) Caregiver Burnout

- ▶ Are You or Other Family Members Are Exhausted?
 - dementia is mentally draining and physically exhausting
 - ▶ caregiver's physical and mental health will suffer
 - ▶ Some family members with cognitive impairment may be emotionally volatile and extremely unpleasant at times
 - irrational demands and being yelled at is stressful for family caregivers
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3) Healthcare Needs

- ▶ Difficulties with medication management
 - Taking too much
 - Not taking meds
 - ▶ Lack of hygiene
 - Wearing the same clothes
 - Inappropriate clothes for the season
 - Not washing hair/brushing teeth
 - ▶ Lack of meal preparation
 - Moldy food in fridge
 - Not eating
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4) Isolation

- ▶ You have isolated yourself due to the needs of your loved one
 - Fear of unpredictable
 - Fear of disruptiveness
- ▶ Your loved one is isolating themselves due to
 - Restlessness and loneliness
 - Lack of stimulation
 - Loss of quality of life

5) Physical Changes

Unexplained Physical Changes: Your Loved One Looks Different

- weight changes
- frailty
- hunched posture
- moving with difficulty

6) Hygiene Concerns

- ▶ Dementia Is Interfering With Personal Care
 - body odor
 - unwashed or wrinkled clothes
 - putting clothes on backwards or inside out
 - Loved one was formerly clean-shaven, starts looking stubbly, he may be forgetting to shave or even how to shave.

7) Neglecting Finances

- ▶ Money Issues: Your Loved One Is Neglecting Finances
- ▶ Losing track of financial matters is one of the first signs of dementia for many people.
- ▶ Look around:
 - Mail piling up unopened?
 - creditor envelopes or collection notices?
 - unpaid bills
 - check taxes and property taxes to make sure they've been paid.
 - If possible, examine your loved ones bank statements for signs of unusual activity.

8) Fraud

- ▶ Fraud: Your Loved One Is Being Scammed
 - ▶ Cognitive impairments are easy targets for scammers
 - ▶ Red Flags
 - strange purchases
 - giving to new charities
 - investing in questionable financial products,
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9) Living Conditions

- ▶ Living Conditions: Fire and Water Damage
 - check her physical environment
 - burn and scorch marks
 - other signs of damage
 - leave a burner on
 - drop a dishtowel on top of a pilot light and not notice the smoke
 - if your loved one smokes, check blankets, mattresses, floors, and counters for scorch marks from dropped cigarette butts.
 - Look for stains, mold, and other signs of water damage. Even spills that haven't been wiped up suggest loss of attention.
 - If a beloved garden or houseplants die because no one remembers to water them, that's a telltale sign as well.

10) Hoarding

- ▶ Multiplying Items:
- ▶ Unnecessary Purchases or Hoarding Can Signal Dementia
 - covered with untouched magazines
 - bathroom shelves stacked with bars of soap
 - multiples of the same item
 - buy something, then not remember next time
 - unwillingness to throw things away
 - if your loved one is showing signs of hoarding, that's an even more serious warning to seek a safer living situation

Planning and Placement

- ▶ Planning should start when dementia diagnosis is made
 - ▶ Research indicates early detection and prompt intervention can preserve remaining abilities and slow progression
 - ▶ Finding a community dedicated to meeting your loved one's unique needs in a safe and comfortable environment
 - ▶ maintaining dignity and quality of life.
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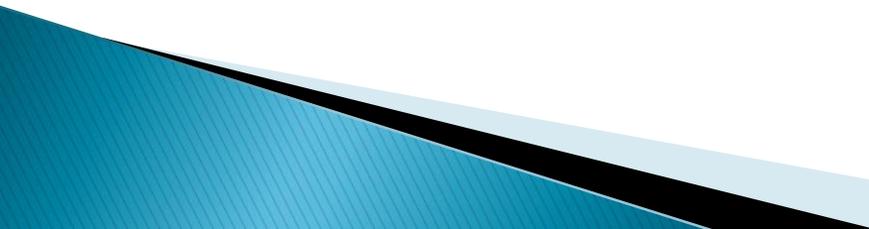
What level of care?

- ▶ There is a difference between:
 - Independent Living
 - Personal Care Home vs Assisted Living
 - Skilled Nursing Home
 - Continuing Care Homes
 - Home Health
 - Adult Day Care
 - ▶ Medicaid vs. Medicare
 - ▶ LTC Insurance
 - ▶ VA benefits
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PROS OF ASSISTED LIVING

- ▶ Assistance with daily living activities like bathing, dressing, and eating
 - ▶ Adapts to changing needs
 - ▶ No need to maintain a home
 - ▶ Greater independence and a home-like setting
 - ▶ Opportunity to socialize with scheduled activities
 - ▶ Lower cost than a nursing home (& in-home care once many hours are needed)
 - ▶ Possible medical assistance on site
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CONS OF ASSISTED LIVING

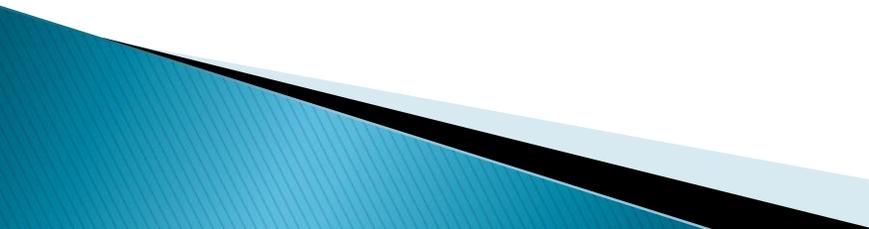
- ▶ Not all assisted living communities are created equal
 - ▶ Can be cost-prohibitive (possible add-on costs or additional care levels)
 - ▶ Some seniors have trouble adjusting to a group setting with policies
 - ▶ Standard assisted living does not offer the level of care for moderate dementia and some medical conditions– unless it is a specialized community or has a memory care unit
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What to Look For–

Research and Design

- ▶ Was the location originally built specifically to help people with dementia succeed?
- ▶ Are visual cues used to help residents navigate, stay oriented and maintain independence?
- ▶ Is the design open, well-planned, secure and simple?
- ▶ Are elements that may cause confusion such as multiple floors and locked units removed?
- ▶ Are rooms cozy and inviting to reduce feelings of isolation?
- ▶ Do walkways flow continuously without barriers throughout the community, promoting a feeling of independence?
- ▶ Can residents stroll inside and out, weather permitting?
- ▶ Are limited access areas not easily detected by residents?
- ▶ Do residents have the freedom to select or participate in activities as they choose

Programming & Pricing

- ▶ Are multiple programs offered?
 - ▶ Do programs concentrate on life skills that meet the unique needs of residents living with memory loss?
 - ▶ Are programs adjusted as the resident's needs change?
 - ▶ Does the staff appropriately care for residents that are restless late at night well?
 - ▶ There are no additional fees for participation in the programs.
 - ▶ Are the residents encouraged and respected when they struggle with memory loss and function?
 - ▶ Are service plans assessed regularly?
 - ▶ Is the team involved in adjusting the service plan with family?
 - ▶ As the resident progresses through the disease, does the cost remain the same?
 - ▶ Are family nights offered often?
 - ▶ Does the facility offer support groups and educational seminars?
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Experience and Staff

- ▶ Does the staff undergo significant training?
 - ▶ Is the staff specially trained to care for residents living with memory loss?
 - ▶ Do staff members need to meet certain qualifications to be employed at the location?
 - ▶ Does the staff greet each resident by name?
 - ▶ Does the team seem well educated in the disease process and its management?
 - ▶ Is continuing education required by the staff? Is the staff-to-resident ratio satisfactory?
 - ▶ Are there other health care professionals on-site for routine appointments to reduce disruption?
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Any Questions or Concerns?

- ▶ Be proactive!
- ▶ Seek help and support from family members
- ▶ Contact an expert!
- ▶ Reach out any time to:
 - Francia Smith, CDP: (703) 407-5429 or francia.smith@arden-courts.com

THANK YOU!
WE ARE HERE TO SUPPORT YOU!

