

Respite for the Caregiver:

WHEN IS IT TIME TO GET HELP?

Are you overwhelmed providing care for someone with Alzheimer's or other dementia? All of us need a break sometimes. Respite care, whether in-home or at an adult day center, gives the caregiver time to work or do personal tasks, to spend with family and friends or to take a break, all while knowing the person with dementia is receiving professional care.

Respite care also benefits the person with dementia by providing safe, supportive interaction with others and enjoyable activities matching their abilities and needs.

You should explore respite care if you:

- Feel you are alone in providing care, but that you still should do more.
- Have withdrawn from people and activities you previously enjoyed.
- Worry whether the person you care for is safe.
- Are anxious about financial and healthcare decisions.
- Deny the impact of dementia on your family.
- Feel grief that your relationship with

the person you care for is diminished.

- Get frustrated or angry dealing with dementia.
- Have health problems of your own that are draining you mentally or physically.

If you experience any of these signs on a regular basis, it's time to get help. Help is available through a variety of organizations, professionals and respite care resources.

Respite care services include in-home care and adult day centers. In-home care options include:

- Companion services that offer company and supervision.
- Personal care and home health aide services that assist with bathing, dressing, bathroom and exercise.
- Skilled care services that help with medication and medical services.

An adult day center is a facility where people with dementia gather for socialization, stimulation and recreational activities in a safe, closely-supervised and well-structured environment. Before

selecting an adult day center, you should arrange a meeting with the staff at the center and ask:

- What are the hours, fees, services, and amenities?
- What programs are offered?
- Are individuals with dementia separated from other participants or included in general activities?
- Is the staff trained in dementia care?
- What healthcare professionals are on staff?
- How is the staff screened?
- How are emergencies handled?

- How does the center ensure the safety of participants?
- Does the center offer transportation?

Finding and using appropriate respite care services can enhance your ability to care for your loved one in the home.

The Alzheimer's Association is a national nonprofit organization that works to enhance care and support for those affected by Alzheimer's and related dementias; the association has a Fort Wayne office and an informative website at www.alz.org.

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