

## Tips for Introducing a New Caregiver

People with dementia often have difficulty adjusting to changes such as working with a new caregiver. You should expect that working with a new caregiver might not go smoothly at first, but it should improve over time. Below are some ideas to help make the process a little less stressful.

IF	THEN
The person with dementia has a strong sense of independence and does not think they need any help	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid trying to convince the person to agree with you. If they are not aware that they need help, logic and reasoning probably won't convince them</li> <li>• See if the person would be willing to give it a try for your sake, even if they don't think they need it</li> <li>• Sometimes bending the truth can be helpful. Try introducing the caregiver as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A friend of the family who is looking for work and needs the patient to help them learn how to cook, garden, get around town, or keep the house tidy</li> <li>○ A "personal assistant" who they can use to have a more active and fulfilling life</li> <li>○ Someone to help you (the caregiver) manage your own responsibilities</li> <li>○ A friend who wants to visit and get to know the person</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

IF	THEN
<p>The person with dementia gets anxious or worried</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wait to tell the person about the new caregiver until the day they start</li> <li>• Help the new caregiver get to know the person with dementia before leaving them alone together:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Have tea or ice cream and make small talk, or enjoy an activity together</li> <li>○ Use the <i>Care Ecosystem Personal Wellness Plan</i> to write down important things for the caregiver to know about the person's history, routine, and likes and dislikes; review this with the new caregiver before they start</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Help the person with dementia feel safe with the new caregiver and reassure them that you think the new caregiver is trustworthy</li> <li>• Avoid talking openly with the patient about any underlying fear, discomfort, or concerns that you may have. For instance, you might worry about loss of privacy or stealing, or you may doubt that the new caregiver can do things as well as you do. Try to find someone else, like a friend, a support group member, or your CTN, to talk with about these concerns</li> </ul>

IF	THEN
<p>The person with dementia has done things in the past that might be scary or difficult for a new caregiver to manage, such as acting aggressively, trying to leave, or behaving inappropriately</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a plan with the caregiver on how to avoid things that are upsetting for the person with dementia, and how to stay calm and safe when they do get upset. For example, tell the new caregiver what topics the person likes to talk about, what activities they enjoy, and ways to distract them</li> <li>• Refer to the DICE table and the <i>Responding to Threatening Behavior</i> handout for more ideas</li> <li>• Identify what usually works, and what is not helpful for the person when they are upset</li> <li>• Make sure the caregiver knows how to reach you or your back-up person in case they need help</li> </ul>

### **Additional Care Ecosystem Handouts:**

Care Ecosystem Personal Wellness Plan

DICE: A Tool for Understanding and Responding to Behavior

Responding to Threatening Behavior

Hiring Caregivers

### **Additional Information from Other Sources:**

Next Step in Care: Working with Home Health Aides:

[http://www.nextstepincare.org/uploads/File/Guides/Home\\_Care/Home\\_Health\\_Aides/Working\\_with\\_Home\\_Health\\_Aides.pdf](http://www.nextstepincare.org/uploads/File/Guides/Home_Care/Home_Health_Aides/Working_with_Home_Health_Aides.pdf)