

Tips for Introducing a New Home

People with dementia often have trouble adjusting to a new home. You should expect that the move will not go smoothly at first, but the person will probably get used to the new home over time. Here are some ideas to help make the process a little less stressful.

IF	THEN
The person is moving to a new place (for example, board and care, assisted living facility, or nursing home)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit the new place ahead of time so you know what to expect • Ask the facility if they have a <i>Resident Transition Handbook</i> and review this handbook before the move. Some facilities give out this handbook on move-in day • Decide how you want to share information about the move with the person with dementia. It may not be helpful to include them in the selection of the new home • Make a plan for the day of the move <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Who will be there to greet you? What activities (games, meals) will be happening that the person can join? ○ What room will you go to? Will the person have a roommate? ○ What supplies does the facility provide? What do you need to bring? Is there anything the person isn't allowed to have? ○ Does the facility have a cart or something similar to help move furniture and other belongings? ○ Will you continue to supply the person's medications, or does the facility plan to get them from a particular pharmacy?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If the person takes opiates or narcotic medication for pain, they may need a special form signed by their doctor to get that medication in the facility ● Bring a permanent marker and some masking tape in case you need to label things ● Bring some water and snacks ● Write down the name and phone number of a good contact person, and make sure they know how to reach you ● Ask about visiting hours and about how you and the person may communicate over the phone ● Request frequent (daily or bi-weekly) updates from the care staff during the transition by phone or in-person
IF	THEN
<p>The person with dementia does not want to move</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This is a difficult situation for everyone. Caregivers often feel guilty when they are no longer able to care for the person at home ● Talk with other family members and friends; see if they can help support you both during this process ● It is important to try to respect the person's wishes; however, you may not always be able to accommodate them ● There are many good reasons to move someone even if they object. For instance, providing care at home: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ May no longer be safe (for you or for them) ○ May cause too much emotional

	<p>stress (for you or for them)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ May cost too much money ○ May be too physically demanding ○ May be too complicated ● Give yourself permission to make the decision that is right for the health and wellbeing of both of you
IF	THEN
<p>The person with dementia gets anxious or worried</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Wait to tell the person about the move until just beforehand ● Plan an enjoyable event with the person while another family member moves their belongings into the new home ● Bring familiar items like photos, a favorite blanket, music, or an activity ● Use the <i>Care Ecosystem Personal Wellness Plan</i> to write down important things staff should know about the person: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Stories from their past ○ Daily routines ○ Any likes and dislikes ● Reassure the person that they are in a safe place and that you will visit them ● Help the person know what to expect; use a whiteboard or calendar in their room to write down scheduled activities and when you plan to visit ● Avoid talking openly with the person about any underlying fear, discomfort, or concerns you may have. For instance, you might worry that the staff won't be able to do things the same way you did them. Work with the staff and your CTN to

	<p>figure out the best way to handle these care issues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to get to know the staff that will care for the person. Your friendly attitude will help the person with dementia feel safe and will also help you work with the staff when future challenges arise • Listen to the person when they talk about their sadness, fears and worries. Apologize for this difficult situation even though it is not your fault
IF	THEN
<p>The person with dementia has done things in the past that might be scary or difficult to manage, such as acting aggressively or trying to leave, or other inappropriate behaviors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify what usually works and what is not helpful for the person when they are upset • Create a plan with the staff 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 staff what topics the person likes to talk about, what activities they enjoy, and good ways to distract them <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Refer to the DICE table and the <i>Responding to Threatening Behavior</i> handouts for more ideas • Make sure the staff knows how to reach you or a back-up person in case something happens

Additional Care Ecosystem Handouts:

Care Ecosystem Personal Wellness Plan

DICE: A Tool for Understanding and Responding to Behavior

Responding to Threatening Behavior