



Caring for Someone Living with Dementia - 06

MAKING THE MOST OF RESPITE CARE

This Help Sheet provides information for people living with dementia, their families and care partners, about understanding and accessing respite services. It provides some practical suggestions for planning and using respite.

What is respite?

Respite is a form of support for all people living at home who have dementia, and their families and care partners. For the person living with dementia, respite can be an opportunity to enjoy relationships and meaningful activities separate from their family or care partners, and can be within their own home or elsewhere. Respite can also be a time where families and care partners of people with dementia are able to sustain their personal wellbeing through work, leisure, interests and self-care.

“...I was glad of course to get out of the house and do something different...and Jill had time to herself to do things...” Person living with dementia

The person with dementia, and their family and care partners, may have different needs for respite. Respite services support both the care partners, and the person with dementia, throughout the changes in their lives.

All respite services should offer flexibility to cater for individual needs, preferred types of respite, and personal circumstance.

The consumer should have choice and control over the planning and delivery of respite services.

Types of Planned Respite Services for people with dementia

- In-home respite.
- Center-based day respite.
- Overnight or weekend respite.
- Community-access respite.
- Flexible respite.
- Respite in a Residential Aged Care Facility.

Tips when considering respite

It is important to prioritize your needs and goals when thinking about respite.

Things to consider:

What type of respite support is right for you?

- Is the type of service provided when you want it, for the time you want it?
- Do respite activities, staff and group members match the personal interests of the person receiving the respite service?
- Is the location and atmosphere safe, friendly and supportive?
- How are individual interests and wellbeing assessed, supported, discussed and reviewed?



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There may be a waiting time, so it is important to plan ahead if you can.

Adjusting to Respite

It may take time to feel confident and comfortable using respite services. It can help to:

- Talk with others about their experiences.
- Take short respite breaks before having longer ones.
- Share the initial experience with your respite worker in order to help everyone to get to know each other.

If you are not happy with the respite service talk to the service provider as it may be easily adjusted or you may want to consider different respite options.

Building partnerships with staff

You can support building relationships with staff by sharing personal information from the beginning. Tell them what the person receiving respite likes and dislikes, their preferences when doing things, reactions to stress and what can help, significant life events, medical issues, medications and emergency arrangements. It can also be useful for the person accessing respite to take with them a life story photo album or board or a meaningful personal object. These tools can aid conversations.

Complaints

If you are unhappy with the respite service and wish to raise any concerns, it is best to speak directly with the service provider, as it may be something that can be easily adjusted and can be resolved quickly in most cases. Alternatively, you may want to consider different respite options.

FURTHER INFORMATION: locally call Dementia Friendly Wyoming 307-461-7134 or visit our website <http://www.dwfsheridan.org> or The Sheridan Senior Center 307-672-2240. Nationally contact the Alzheimer's Association at 1-800-272-3900, or visit their website at <http://www.alz.org>.