

# Caregiver Checklist

- Evaluation/Assessment**

Medical, neurological and psychological assessments will assist in determining an accurate diagnosis of the person's symptoms. Find a good doctor who understands dementia that you can trust. Be sure to tell them about all symptoms and changes in the individual. A log or journal is helpful to track your observations and to communicate concerns with the doctor. Start with a consultation and memory screening with one of our Education Specialists.
- Educate yourself**

Learn about progressive dementias through books, websites, workshops, and your local Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska. We have ongoing free trainings for family caregivers.
- Hold a family conference**

Everyone who will be involved in caregiving and planning for the future should attend the conference. E-mail or online formats are useful tools to keep everyone informed on a regular basis.
- Assess your support system**

As a caregiver, you will need a good support system. Join a caregiver support group. Accept help from friends. Talk about what is going on at home with someone you trust.
- Your health**

Your health is just as important as your loved one's health. Try to get enough rest. Exercise regularly. Eat well-balanced meals. Find relief through an adult day center or respite care. Let our Care Coordinators help to find what works for you. Be kind to yourself! Remember that it is OK to have fun.
- Home Safety**

Assess the need for wandering safety devices such as door and window alarms and a Safe Return bracelet. Remove dangerous items from within easy reach (hide car keys if your loved one can no longer drive, and lock up poisons, sharp knives, guns, power tools, etc). You may need to move furniture and slippery rugs if your loved one develops a shuffling gait. Remove distracting paintings or wall hangings if they start to confuse the individual. Be sure to have window coverings for when it gets dark
- Legal & Financial**

Is there a Durable Power of Attorney, and if necessary, a Guardian, or Conservator? Is there a Living Will? What kinds of insurance does the individual have? What does it cover? What are the individual's sources of income – social security, pensions, etc.? Be sure you know about all bank accounts, safe deposit boxes, etc. the individual has in his/her name. Check out eligibility of Medicare and Medicaid to see if they are an option.