

Introducing Services

Once the decision has been made to bring services into the home or involve your loved one in a day program, it is important to think about how to introduce the change.

- Try to include your loved one in the discussion about services as much as possible; let him/her know that getting some help will be good for you, and give you peace of mind.
- Be persistent. Often individuals with dementia are resistant to change because it may confuse or frighten them. Over time, the individual will become accustomed to a substitute caregiver, day program, or other service.
- Introduce only one service at a time.
- Staff members of the various service agencies are accustomed to dealing with the problem of resistant individuals, so don't be afraid to ask them for help.
- Try leaving your loved one alone with a familiar relative or friend a few times before introducing him/her to a companion who is a stranger.
- If having a stranger come into the home upsets your loved one, then they may be more comfortable with a worker from a familiar ethnic or religious background.
- If needed, use creativity when introducing an in-home worker. For example, introduce the worker as a friend of yours or a physical therapist. Think of a way your loved one would be more open to the individual's assistance.

Introducing Services, cont.

- Day programs may be very appropriate for individuals with dementia. In the beginning, your loved one may be resistant to going, but once they attend for a few days, they often look forward to it. Sometimes it may be helpful to introduce your loved one's time at the center as volunteer work or housekeeping assistance.

Some tips for making in-home services work:

Find out if the home care worker has training or experience in working with individuals experiencing dementia. This will give you an idea of how much instruction you will have to give.

- Be present when the worker arrives and be home before the worker is scheduled to leave.
- Provide a written or verbal description of the daily schedule along with helpful tips to the worker when he or she arrives.
- If your loved one cannot be left alone, then be sure the worker understands this.