



Family Caregivers
of British Columbia

Facility Placement – Coping With the Move

Talk about it a lot:

You will have a lot of mixed feelings about this: relief, anger, sadness, anxiety, guilt. Your family will also experience a whole range of thoughts and feelings. It's important to talk this through and accept your feelings as legitimate. Talk to someone impartial.

Take your time. Be patient:

It helps to make this kind of decision over time and under normal circumstances, in other words, the sooner the better. You can always refuse placement if you are not ready or if it is no longer necessary, but it is almost impossible to get a residential bed quickly.

Allow time for settling in:

No one adjusts to this kind of change quickly. Fill the surroundings with reminders of home and family: paintings, furniture, blankets, plants, photographs.

Make visits count:

Regular, predictable visits are important, as is quality time. Try to keep involved in daily home decisions and outside activities. Balance time between relaxed sharing of silence of television to more active pastimes like cards, reminiscing, residential activities.

Don't avoid concerns:

Keep talking about problems in this new life. Don't try to pretend it's all wonderful when it isn't. There may still be concerns and questions related to the illness that need to be discussed.

Keep helping with care:

It means a lot when family still choose to help with personal care or to do special tasks, even when it's no longer necessary.

Remember, it can be reassuring to know your family is managing quite well, but it's also nice to know that you are missed.

Facility Placement – Taking Care of Each Other

This is a time of endings and beginnings. The end of hopes and dreams, of past roles and activities. It can also be the beginning of new kinds of relationships and setting new priorities.

Acknowledge:

- The treasures and memories you have
- The good and bad times
- The depth of your feelings
- Different family reactions
- The future

Share:

- The opportunity to learn about caring: pain, fears, hopes, laughter, tears, love
- Time together for music: stories, reminiscing, movies, games, prayer, meditations, quiet
- A family project such as an album or scrap book, a tape, a picture
- Outside life, family successes
- Your grief

Discuss:

- Family problems and tensions; don't stop talking in and effort to protect one another
- Family strengths and good things that have come out of this time
- The future and what it means or holds
- What each family member needs (remember this will change) and what each family member can give

Facility Placement – Aspects of Self Care

It may be difficult to relax during times of stress and change. However, those are the times when it is doubly important to do so. Caring for a seriously ill person is a demanding task, so it is essential that you find ways of looking after yourself. If you can maintain your 'health' then you will be able to be there refreshed, renewed and restored.

You need time for yourself every day to relax.

Emotionally:

- Deal with your grief and release the emotions that arise
- Find quiet time to be alone (even 5 minutes can do wonders)
- Plan a 'day off' on a regular basis
- Meet with a counsellor or a support group
- Ask for support from understanding friends

Physically:

- Eat properly
- Participate in some kind of exercise: e.g. walk, swim
- Get adequate rest and sleep
- Put your feet up, literally

Socially:

- Meet with old friends who understand your needs
- Talk about anything except placement
- Engage in shared activities: e.g. bridge, crafts, golf

Spiritually:

- Talk with a spiritual advisor, priest or rabbi
- Spend time in a nurturing place: e.g. church, hide-away, beach
- Explore your beliefs, re-affirm life

Thoughts:

- Read a mindless book, listen to soothing music
- Meditate
- Write in a private journal or diary, paint

You will be able to come up with our own list of self-care activities that nourish and re-energize you. Just remember to take the time to do them!

Facility Placement – Shifting the Caregiver Role

What will change for you as a caregiver as a result of the move to a facility?

Letting go of old ways of living together:

Take a quiet moment to imagine:

- Your current surroundings you share together
- Your current routine of care
- Your current daily activity

How will your role as caregiver be different now?

Shifting to new ways of being together:

Take a quiet moment to imagine:

- New surroundings
- New routine of care
- New daily activity

Facility Placement – Grief and Letting Go

Personal losses when you or someone else moves to a facility:

1. List the three most significant losses you will experience in this move. Things? Hopes? People/Pets?

2. What do you need to do to let go?

3. In which way could you bring some aspect of home to the facility? What do you value most?

4. What do you need to give you the strength and ability to complete this move?