



MANAGING THE TRANSITION TO FACILITY PLACEMENT

At some point in the caregiving journey many families are faced with the decision of facility placement. This decision is often precipitated by a crisis or a change in health and becomes necessary either because the care recipient is no longer able to safely remain at home or because family members can no longer provide the level or type of care that is now needed. There comes a time when a move to a care facility may be the way to provide the best care needed and to relieve the overwhelming demands on the family.

It is natural for family members to feel guilt, grief, or anxiety in facing this decision and there will often be differing perspectives from the various people concerned. The transition can bring with it new challenges and stresses for everyone involved. When this time comes it is important to acknowledge the reality of the current situation, rather than holding on to the way things used to be. It is not a failure on your part as a family that you are no longer able to provide the level of care that is needed. As the care recipient's health declines the amount of care required can become overwhelming, especially for one person. In addition, the equipment needed to provide the necessary care may only be available in a facility.

Caregiving does not end when your family member moves into residential care. You may have more free time and will not have sole responsibility for their personal care, but you will still be providing emotional support, making legal and financial decisions, visiting them and participating in care decisions. However, you will now have the opportunity to regain your previous relationship (i.e. as spouse, son, or daughter) with your family member because you will not be focusing all your time and energy on being their caregiver.

If you think that the time may be approaching for residential care to be considered, plan in advance and do your research. Knowing what your options are and the steps in the process can help lessen the stress that this transition can bring. Contact the Home and Community Care department of your local health authority. An assessment by a case manager must be completed to access care facilities that are subsidized by the health authorities. There are also private care facilities where the resident pays the cost.

By Barbara Small, Former Program Development Coordinator, FCBC