

Helping your family member with dementia move into residential aged care



When a person is living with dementia, they may need extra support. Sometimes changes in your family member may mean they can no longer stay at home and may need more help or 24-hour care.

Supporting your family member

Adjusting to a new place can be especially difficult for someone who is living with dementia, who may not understand why they cannot stay at home or be on Country. Living in aged care will be a big change for your family member with new people caring for them, different routines, and surroundings. This helpsheet provides ideas about how to help your family member feel more at home in aged care and keep connection with family and community.



Practical tips

Help staff get to know your family member. This will allow staff to provide care that is right for them and understand how to help.

- Share stories about your family member, where they are from, who their family are, their interests and hobbies, likes and dislikes.
- Tell staff about things that upset your family member, what they might do, and what helps them relax. This will allow staff to understand how to help.
- If you are not comfortable sharing your family's stories, this will be respected.

Surround your family member by as many familiar things as possible.

This will help them feel connected with their land and community and reduce anxiety and stress.

Family Carer Helpsheet

- Decorate their room with photos, play favourite music, bring in paintings, their own pillows, blankets or other meaningful items.
- Bring in favourite foods and snacks they enjoy.
- Take your family member out to visit places they are connected to or do activities they enjoy e.g. go shopping, fishing. Go to the local shop, attend Sorry Business or have weekends away. This can also be good for the community who may be feeling the loss of their community member.
- Some people may be sensitive to different smells in their new surroundings. Bring in items from home that have a scent or smell that is familiar.
- Talk about the new routines and surroundings with your family member. This can help your family member to adjust and reduce stress.

- Remember to make each visit as enjoyable as possible for you and your family member. Do something you know like going for a walk or listening to music.
- Look after yourself and if you are feeling like things are too hard you can call Dementia Support Australia any time day or night.

Resources

If your family member is a survivor of the Stolen Generation your family may need extra support over this time. If you would like more information the Healing Foundation can help. Call the Healing Foundation on **02 6272 7500** or visit: **www.healingfoundation.org.au**

If care of your family member has become too hard call Dementia Support Australia any time day or night on **1800 699 799**.

If you need to talk to someone, call Dementia Australia on **1800 100 500**.

This resource was created in consultation with the DSA Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander expert review panel and champions group.

Taking care of yourself

Having your family member move into aged care can be a difficult time for the family too. It is important that you feel supported and understand what is happening.

- Decide on one or two people to make decisions and help provide and receive information about your family member.
- Ask for a member of staff who is trained in helping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people move into aged care.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions if you have worries or would like information. If you don't understand something, ask the care staff to explain.
- Good dementia care involves family and friends as much as possible. Talk to the residential aged care staff about how you can get involved in your family member's care.

