

Which residential facility?

4.2

RESIDENTIAL CARE AND DEMENTIA

This Help Sheet provides information for families and carers of people with dementia who need to move to residential care. It discusses some of the things to consider when choosing a residential facility that will suit the needs of the person with dementia.

After the ACAT assessment

The Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT) will advise you which type of accommodation is best for the person with dementia. They will probably suggest that you look at a number of facilities and will give some names and contact details for some facilities that may be appropriate.

Looking at residential facilities

When you are choosing a facility take time to consider how it will meet the needs of the person with dementia. For example, does the facility have appropriate activities for stimulation and security and suitable practices for someone who wanders?

It is advisable to visit at least three facilities. Ring and make an appointment with the Director of Nursing or Manager. Some facilities welcome prospective residents and their family and carers to visit for a meal and this can provide an opportunity to talk to other residents and get a feel for the place.

You may find it helpful to take a friend or relative with you and a checklist of questions. You may need to visit more than once. Remember that first impressions count. Rely upon your intuition and commonsense.

If the situation is urgent you may find that your preferred choice is unavailable and you are under pressure to accept the first bed available.

You may need to decide which of the needs of the person with dementia is more important. For example, rather than the person having a large room, you might decide that it is more important that they are located close enough to home so

that you can visit easily. You may be able to resolve any concerns you have, for example, about room size, by talking to the staff about how the person with dementia could have access to other areas.

Making the choice

You need to judge the situation for yourself and feel comfortable with whichever decision you make. This may mean that you decline the first offer of an available bed. If the person is in hospital this may be difficult. Some hospitals may pressure you to accept the first offer. If you feel the vacancy is not appropriate to the needs of the person with dementia discuss your concerns with the hospital's Discharge Liaison Officer or social worker.

If the vacancy you accept is not your preferred choice, you may be able to transfer to the facility of your choice when a bed becomes available. Let the preferred facility know that you are still interested and keep in touch with them.

What is good design in a residential facility for people with dementia?

Most people with dementia respond well to small, familiar domestic environments with safe places to move about in. A checklist of dementia-friendly design features is included in this Help Sheet.

Using this checklist may help you when visiting different facilities.

Contact the National Dementia Helpline on **1800 100 500**

Visit Alzheimer's Australia at **www.alzheimers.org.au**

Dementia Friendly Environmental Checklist

- Does the facility feel home-like? Yes No
- Is it obvious how to get to the toilet from most parts of the facility? Yes No
- Are residents' different cultural backgrounds considered? Yes No
- Do people usually seem to be relaxed and comfortable in the facility? Yes No
- Are there objects that people are likely to bump into or trip over placed in safe areas? Yes No
- Would it be clear to the resident where to go if they needed help? Yes No
- Is this room decorated with subtle, home-like furnishings that are not too busy or distracting? Yes No
- Is this room decorated in a style that the resident would feel comfortable with? Yes No
- Are there quiet and private spaces available? Yes No
- If you were lost could you see something that would help you to work out where you were? Yes No
- Is there a safe sun-protected outdoor space for residents? Yes No
- Does each resident have space for their personal, special belongings nearby? Yes No

Adapted from Kratiuk-Wall et al in *Cultural diversity and dementia*, Commonwealth of Australia, 1997



Remember

It may be possible to discuss some of these specific features with residents, their relatives and staff.

Further Information

Alzheimer's Australia offers support, information, education and counselling. Contact the National Dementia Helpline on **1800 100 500**.

For further information and to view other Help Sheets visit our web site at **www.alzheimers.org.au**