

QUICK TIPS

Communicating with the Care Team in a Long-Term Care Home

When a loved one moves into a long-term care home, families often continue to play an important role in their care. Building a **respectful partnership with the care team** can help ensure your loved one's needs, preferences, and routines are well understood.

1. Share What You Know About Your Loved One

- Preferred routines and daily habits
- Favourite foods, music, and activities
- Cultural or spiritual traditions
- What helps them feel calm when upset
- Past occupations or roles that were meaningful
- What to say and what not to say

2. Build Relationships with Staff

Take time to learn the names of staff members and introduce yourself. A simple, friendly conversation can help build trust.

Remember that care staff often support many residents. Patience and kindness can go a long way in building positive working relationships.

3. Ask Questions and Seek Clarification

If something concerns you, it is okay to ask questions.

Examples:

- “Can you help me understand what happened today?”
- “What strategies have been working well lately?”
- “Is there anything our family can do to help?”

Approaching conversations with curiosity rather than blame encourages productive dialogue.

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4. Choose the Right Time for Conversations

Staff are often busiest during meals, medication times, and personal care routines.

If you have a more detailed concern, ask if there is a **better time to talk** or request a meeting with the appropriate team member.

5. Use a Team Approach

Good care is a partnership between families and the care team. You will be invited to “Family Care Conferences”.

Members of the team may include:

- Nurses
- Care aides
- Recreation staff
- Social workers
- Dietitians
- Physicians

6. Focus on Solutions

If a concern arises, try framing it around shared goals.

Example:

Instead of saying:

"No one is helping my mother eat."

Try:

"I've noticed Mom sometimes needs encouragement during meals. How can we work together to support her?"

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7. Participate in the Family Care Conference

These meetings take place after 3 months and then annually. They are an opportunity to:

- Ask questions
- Share observations
- Review care strategies
- Discuss changes in needs

Be sure to write down your questions prior to the meeting and maybe ask a 2nd person to join you to take notes.

A Final Reminder

Care homes can be busy environments, and staff are doing their best to support many residents. Families who approach communication with **respect, curiosity, and collaboration** often find that stronger partnerships develop over time.

Feel free to reach out to us for personalized support.

Contact us at Info@DementiaSolutions.ca