



Aging Wisely With Linda

Consultations/Consulting • Counseling/Coaching
Expert on Dementia • Speaking/Teaching

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When Is It Time for Memory Care?

We have about 700,000 individuals with Alzheimer's dementia in California. I would guess if you added those with the other dementias, we have about 1 million people living with a progressive dementia in our state. The care or oversight required is often a burden that cannot be managed by one individual as it progresses, and often moving to a full time memory care facility is determined to be a necessary step.



What are some of the catalysts for this move from home to a specialized care community?

- Primary caregiver is “burned out”. Their health is at risk if they continue to provide 24/7 care. They have tried community supports & hired caregivers.
- Primary caregiver finds themselves constantly raising their voice or shouting at the individual with dementia.
- The individual is living alone and is a risk to themselves or others.
- The collective family and/or community support systems can no longer provide the care necessary.

The decision to move to memory care is both an emotional dilemma and a strategic challenge for everyone in the circle of care. Often family members feel they have failed when it is really about the increasing needs of the other. You have not failed when this decision is evident – remind yourself it is the “dementia” and not you making the move.



I have shared the image above with my Zoom class participants along with this thought:

If your caretaker “match” is burned out, then it is past the time to make the decision to move to memory care. Your family member will always need your love and advocacy. If you die or have a serious illness before they leave life, who will be the advocate and voice for them?

When should you plan for such a move? How do you do it? How do you choose a memory care facility, and what will be the cost?

I encourage everyone to begin researching Memory Care communities early in the process of navigating a dementia; you might never have to play that card, but if you do, you will be prepared and informed. Listen for suggestions from friends and family that have heard good things about your local memory care units. Join support groups and listen to where others have looked or placed a loved one. Visit facilities that interest you and then revisit those you liked on your first visit every 6 months, even when you do not think the time for a move has arrived.



Two questions to ask when visiting facilities:

1. How long has the director of the Memory Care Unit been in the job? (You want to hear more than two years.)
2. What is the training and background of the director. (You do not want to hear hospitality. You want them to have worked in a profession like social work, gerontology, dementia day care, or nursing.)

You also want to know how often the memory care unit conducts trainings for their caregivers. Communities that support their caregivers are communities that deliver high quality care. Additionally, can the community ensure you that everyone knows how to communicate with someone with a dementia? Finally, you want to see ongoing activities, not just a posted list of activities that do not seem to be happening.

One of my free Zoom classes covers the transition to memory care and will give you more information on how to make this hard decision, as well as how to relight your match once you have made the choice to move to memory care. I rotate through class topics each month. Check my [Classes & Events](#) page to find out about upcoming topics, or [sign up for my newsletter](#) to stay informed about the monthly topics!

Affirmation: “Life has challenges, with answers I have explored before they are needed.”