

Adult Day Care

Suzann Ogland-Hand, PhD

“My dad has Alzheimer’s Disease, and I think my mom needs some regular breaks. But I can’t always provide that. I’ve heard about Adult Day Care, or Day Respite, Programs. I don’t know if my mom would ever go for it – let alone my dad. How can I get them to try it?”

Trying something new

Trying out a new service – whether it is respite, a home chore worker, or home-delivered meals – can feel stressful. As a caregiver, learning the vast array of services designed to help you, your loved one, and your family is important. And viewing the trial of a new service as “something new to experience and try out” can be a helpful framework.

Respite

The word “Respite” refers to a short time of relief or rest. It allows the caregiver to take a break from typical daily duties while the person with dementia receives care and socialization from qualified individuals.

Respite can be provided in many different ways. It can be provided in home, at an agency, or at a residential care facility. It can be offered for part of day, an entire day, evening, or overnight. It can be provided by paid staff, volunteers, friends or family. It can occur occasionally or on a regular schedule.

Raise the Issue

If you believe your mom and your dad could benefit from Respite services, it would be important for you to raise the issue. Presenting information in a matter-of-fact manner can be helpful. Some caregivers are surprised to hear that services like Adult Day Care are available, as they’ve had no previous experience with it. Then, do some investigating about options.

Checking out the Options.

In Kent County, we have a number of options for Respite. Adult Day Services in an out-of-home setting are provided by CareTree Adult Services & Friendship Place (of Gerontology Network, phone 616/456.6135) and by Side-by-Side (of Hope Network Behavioral Health Services at Family Life Center, phone 616/235-2910.37). Stop in and see the programs, meet the staff, get a tour, and get your questioned answered. (See Jim Woudstra & Louise Kempker’s article “Top 10 Questions to Ask About Adult Day Respite” in this issue).



Overnight Respite Services are also provided by Side-by-Side as well as by Luther Community (phone 616/452.6084). In-home Respite is provided by Luther Community, as well as by Gentiva Health Services (phone 616/942.5744) and Health Care Associates and Community CareGivers (phone 616/531.9973).

Barriers to trying Adult Day Care

Some caregivers are hesitant to try Respite. This may be because their days are already so full they can't imagine incorporating one additional thing. In this situation, work with your mother to check out the options, and address this barrier with her. In the long run, she'll be glad she did. Often regular Respite offers the possibility of being able to maintain a loved one in the home and community longer, versus needing long-term care placement at a nursing home.

Frequent barriers to trying Respite are emotional issues, such as guilt for needing or taking time away. Many caregivers mistakenly believe they somehow should be able to do it all. In this situation, as an adult child with your parents, help emphasize the fact that seeking help doesn't make you a failure. And remember that these services benefit the person with dementia as well as the caregiver (See "Top 10 Benefits of Adult Day Services" in this issue).

Some caregivers have been engaged in the caregiving role for a long time, and in the process, have given up many individual or social activities. These caregivers are reluctant to use Respite because they are unsure what to do with the "free time." The *Respite Care Guide*, put out by the Alzheimer's Association, offers the following suggestions:

- **Getting Things Done.** Go grocery shopping. Run errands. Take care of the little things you have put on hold.
- **Caring for Yourself.** Visit friends, see a movie, or go to a museum. Take time to do things you enjoy. Relax, rest, and refresh yourself.
- **Being an Individual.** You are more than just a caregiver. You will not be in this role forever, and it is important to maintain your past and current friends and interests.

Additionally, these caregivers also benefit from meeting regularly with a counselor or therapist (a psychologist or social worker) to help plan ways to use their time.

More resources

If you want more information about resources here in Kent County, the Caregiver Resource Network can help. Their web-page (www.caregiverresource.net) can provide you with information about local programs and services, fact sheets, and a questionnaire about caregiver strain. Or call Area Agency on Aging of Western Michigan (616.456.5664), HHS Health Options (616.285.2590), Senior Neighbors (616.459.6019), or Gerontology Network (616.771.9748) for more help. If you want more information specifically about dementia, call your local Alzheimer's Association (800.893.8365).

Send your caregiving questions to: Dr. Suzann Ogland-Hand, Caregiver's Corner, Pine Rest (MC), PO Box 165, Grand Rapids, MI 49501-0165, or email at suzann.ogland-hand@pinerest.org.

Reference: Alzheimer's Association [Respite Care Guide](#) (2002).

Column written by Suzann Ogland-Hand, PhD, clinical geropsychologist at Pine Rest Christian Mental Health Services, and member of Caregiver Resource Network, a partnership of Kent County organizations dedicated to providing information and support for family and professional caregivers within the community. Please send your caregiving questions to suzann.ogland-hand@pinerest.org, and look for the Caregiver's Corner in the next edition of *Mature Lifestyles*.