



MAJOR NEUROCOGNITIVE DISORDER: DEMENTIA

Programme régional ambulatoire de gériatrie (PRAG)

HOW TO FACILITATE THE TRANSITION TO A NEW LIVING ENVIRONMENT



The person, who used to be completely independent, is now having more and more difficulty with daily tasks, such as bathing and feeding. As a caregiver, you want to ensure your loved one's well-being for as long as possible and are beginning to think about moving to a residence. The purpose of this guide is to offer you different strategies that could facilitate your loved one's transition to their new living environment.

If you are having second thoughts or questioning long term placement, take a moment to read our document:

Thoughts on accommodations



Choosing the right living environment for your loved one can sometimes be a challenge because of the different aspects to consider (needs, level of autonomy, financial situation). The Info santé/social workers at 811 and/or your CLSC can guide you.

DISCUSSION ON MOVING TO A RESIDENCE

Living arrangements can be a sensitive issue to discuss with your loved one. Some people may be reluctant or even refuse to leave their home. It is important to respect their choice. When faced with a refusal, you can always visit facilities and present the accommodation differently, highlighting positive aspects such as:

- ❖ **Social life:** group meals, recreational activities, choir, etc.
- ❖ **Comfort or rest:** warm environment, not having to cook, attentive staff, etc.
- ❖ **Infrastructure:** in some residences, your loved one may have access a garden, an auditorium/cinema, stores, etc.



BEFORE MOVING

- ❖ Check to see if it is possible to take a tour of the new living environment with your loved one to familiarize them with the environment.
- ❖ Discuss the upcoming move with the future living environment
 - **How the environment works:** How are meals organized? Is a certain way to proceed? An activity schedule? Etc.
 - **Transmission of information** and documents about the person.
 - **Care management:** Who provides the care? How is the care provided? How much care per week? Do I have to provide the materials?
 - **What can or should be brought in?** Personal belongings? Furniture? Medication? Valuable items? Decorations?
 - **Possibility of arranging** the room before the arrival of the loved one?

MOVING DAY

- ❖ Take the time to explain to the family member how the move will work and ask for their opinion. For example, ask "What do you need to be comfortable? How do you want to set up your room?"
- ❖ Identify the positive aspects of the new environment (see Addressing Accommodation).
- ❖ Once in the environment, take the person on a tour of the premises.
- ❖ Mention that the other residents look happy and are comfortable.
- ❖ Present the person's room with familiar objects:
 - Pictures, knickknacks, bedding, furniture, clothing, etc.
- ❖ If possible, spend the day with your loved one. Participate in activities, share a meal, help the person with their bedtime routine, etc.
- ❖ The timing of your departure can create anxiety and anguish in your loved one. If necessary, establish a strategy beforehand (leave during a group activity, when the care team is present, at snack time, etc.).



AFTER THE MOVE

- ❖ It is normal for your loved one to need a period of time to find their bearings and adapt to their new environment. Be reassuring and remind them that you are there for them.
- ❖ Continue to visit at different times: eat a meal together in the common room, participate in group activities and try to introduce them to the other residents.
- ❖ Try to replicate moments in life that your loved one enjoyed before moving in: going to the hair dresser/barber, watching a TV show in their pajamas, exercising outside, etc. Be creative!
- ❖ Talk to the staff to inform them of any changes and let them know about your loved one's special needs.
- ❖ If it is not easy for you to visit, phone calls are a good way to stay in touch.
- ❖ Provide ways for the living environment to "mimic" your presence: record your voice, create a video with your family, make a postcard/letter, provide photos, etc.

IMPORTANT!

Your role as a caregiver continues even when your loved one is in a new residence! While some of the day-to-day care will be taken over by the team in the new environment, you can devote your time and energy to sharing good times together.

The proposed strategies are suggestions for solutions to explore. Be creative and adapt them to your loved one, because you know your loved one the best!

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Société Alzheimer. (2016). *Envisager un transfert dans un foyer de soins longue durée*.
https://alzheimer.ca/sites/default/files/files/national/long-term-care/soins-de-longue-duree_1-envisager-un-transfert-dans-un-foyer.pdf