

Building Partnerships with Families in Long Term Care

When a family places a loved one into a Long Term Care Home (LTCH) it can be very difficult for all concerned. There are a number of ways that frontline caregivers in the LTCH can help to ease this transition for the new resident and for their family.

Help families feel welcome

- Assure them that they are welcome to visit at any time.
 - Help them to understand the routine of the LTCH so they are less likely to be surprised when they drop by.
 - Visiting can be quite draining and families may find visits very difficult.
- Make sure that you refer these families to the appropriate people on staff (the social worker or nurse manager) so they can receive encouragement and support.



Encourage families to participate

Some family members may not feel up to participating in the care of their family member or activities in the home, but the option to participate should remain open at all times. While it may be difficult, try to refrain from judging them. There may be a valid reason why they choose not to participate.

Assure the family that their loved one is important to you

- Families may find it reassuring to know that you have dementia specific training. Let them know about your past training and experience.
- Take some time to ask families about their family member. They will appreciate your interest and will be one of the best sources of information about your client. The more you know about the person with dementia, the better care you will be able to give and the better your relationship with that person and their family will be.



Keep the family informed

Although it may not be your direct responsibility to inform families of their family members' adjustment or progress in the home, be sure to mention funny and positive happenings. Discuss the activities that the family member seems to enjoy.

Always remain open to questions, concerns, and complaints

Families will see you as the primary connection to the well being of their loved one. Remember that it is often very difficult for families to have a loved one living in a LTCH. It is especially hard to see a loved one becoming progressively more affected by dementia. Remember that this is your job, but this is their life. Always treat family members with respect.

If you have any questions please email us at pec@alzheimerontario.org