



Housing & Community Services Department Office on Aging

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IS SOMEONE YOU KNOW BECOMING FORGETFUL?

Source: Rebecca Ward, Adult Day Services of Orange County

If your parent, spouse, or other loved one is losing or forgetting things, it is truly a cause for concern. A variety of medical conditions can cause forgetfulness, confusion, and personality changes. It is important that the loved one be assessed by a medical professional to rule out conditions that are curable, such as medication side effects or hormonal imbalance. But, if the diagnosis indicates Alzheimer's Disease, the most common cause of memory loss, or another progressive incurable dementia, know that you are not alone. There is help for the caregivers of those with dementia at various stages of the inevitable decline.

In the early stages of the disease, there is something beneficial for the afflicted person that many caregivers overlook in their desire to be loving and personally supportive. It is called *adult day care*. Far from being a place where seniors are dropped off and forgotten, adult day care centers offer a place outside the home where those suffering from dementia can be stimulated and cared for by professionals in a safe, supportive environment. While the person alone at home staring at the TV or the walls often feels lonely and depressed, those who attend an adult day care center are fully engaged in life experiences at the level they can appreciate. Also, dementia victims who are actively stimulated during the day, tend to sleep through the night—thus avoiding the confusion and possible nighttime wandering experienced by those who can't sleep at night.

Adult day care gives elders the opportunity to make friends and enjoy a host of activities in a safe and comfortable environment. Getting out of the house and being around other people makes a big difference in the quality of life of a person afflicted by dementia. Participants engage in activities designed to stimulate them at the exact level that is best for the individual. Whether its music, art, trivia, bingo, individualized exercise, a field trip, adult day care can help your loved one feel happier, less depressed, and more interested in life. At the same time, therapeutic activities help the participants maintain their abilities to walk, dress, feed themselves, speak, and function among others. It's no wonder that adult day care participants seem to maintain their abilities to communicate and function longer than those who go directly from the home to residential facilities.

When a loved one is enrolled in adult day care, his caregiver can pursue her regular life duties – working, homemaking without worry that her loved is being well cared for.

Its no wonder that people say adult day care is the very best transition between independent living and institutionalization – best for the caregiver, and best for the loved-one.

For the numbers of Adult Day Care facilities in Orange County or if you need assistance for an older adult, a person with disabilities, or a caregiver, call the Office on Aging at: **1-800-510-2020**.