

Caring Transition

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If you have a loved one with dementia and you are their primary caregiver, your life changes right along with theirs. Both of you may struggle with fear and depression and unless you have experienced this with another loved one in your past, you do not know what to expect or how to prepare for the future.

Over time your responsibilities for managing the household and caring for your loved one increases – especially as their behaviors become more and more challenging. You may become tired, lose your patience and then feel guilty. At some point, your loved one may require 24 hour supervision and demanding physical attention. You begin to lose sleep and become mentally and physically exhausted. You may finally have to concede that you are no longer able to provide the care that he or she needs. Too often, the spouse or other family member becomes ill before they make the decision to turn the care over to someone else.

If you or someone you know is facing this situation, we urge you to consider two things:

- 1) **Turning the primary care for your loved one over to someone else that is better equipped to manage it, does not mean you stop caring for them or you are abandoning them.** Rather, it means that you are strong enough to do what is best for them, despite your own feelings. And you will still have responsibilities. You will be finding them the best quality care that you can and you will be overseeing it to ensure that your loved ones needs continue to be met. The good news is that you will have the energy to do so because you will be receiving the rest that you need. Best of all, the time you will now spend with your loved one will be better quality time.

- 2) **Become educated on your options and make your choices BEFORE you are faced with an emergency.** What would happen if your loved one wanders and gets lost because you fell asleep? What would happen if you are suddenly faced with your own medical emergency and are physically unable to provide care? What if his or her behaviors suddenly pose a physical threat to your safety?

Our staff at Fellowship Square Historic Mesa are experts on aging and the challenges of dementia and caregiving. Our Memory Care unit, Reflections, provides a safe and compassionate environment for residents, at the same time providing relief and support for their spouses and other loved ones. We are part of Christian Care Company, a non-profit organization founded on Christian values. We accept ALTCS (Arizona Long Term Care), our state's Medicaid program and can direct families on how to apply.

Additionally, the Alzheimer's Association has bountiful information to help family caregivers as the disease progresses and their lifestyle changes. They also offer a great deal of information on care options. <https://www.alz.org/help-support/caregiving>

We're here for you. If you have questions or would like more information, please contact us at 480-834-0600 or visit our website at <https://www.fellowshipsquareseniorliving.org/campus/az/historic-mesa/>