

## Take care of the practical things

Here is a list of practical things that will need to be undertaken when your family member is admitted to residential care. Try to organise some of these in advance to relieve stress at the time of admission - family or friends may be able to help. The tasks ahead include:

- ▣ Labelling all clothing and equipment.
- ▣ Engraving dentures and glasses - things that can't be labelled.
- ▣ Organising change of address.
- ▣ Sorting out financial and/or legal arrangements.
- ▣ Organising a new GP if the current GP can't continue the care.
- ▣ Writing a summary of the things you think the facility will need to know - take this with you on the day of admission.
- ▣ Sorting out which personal possessions and furniture to take.

You may also like to help your family member develop a 'life history' by choosing photos and captions to include in a photo album. This could be helpful to your family member, staff and other residents as they are getting to know one another. It's often a great conversation starter.

## Help your family member to ease into the idea

Where possible, involving your family member in finding the 'right' residential care facility is the best way to help them ease into the idea.

*"Harry never 'loved' the idea, but he came to accept it.  
It helped to talk about all the things we would still do together."*

Here are some other suggestions from carers and families:

- ▣ Involve your family member in choosing which personal items to take or shopping for items they need.
- ▣ Talk about continuing regular routines and activities they enjoy (e.g. having the paper delivered daily or visiting grandchildren).
- ▣ Arrange visits to your preferred facilities together. Meet the staff and other residents - perhaps go for lunch or activities.
- ▣ Use day respite if available. If your family member is currently at home, day respite may help them feel more comfortable about the move - and give you a short break.
- ▣ Use residential respite. Your family member and the staff will get to know each other which can make the permanent move a little easier later on.



## Take care of yourself too

Organising the admission forces you to deal with the reality of what's ahead. This will evoke a range of different feelings and meanings for both you and your family member. Grief is a normal reaction.

Carers give the following advice:

- ▣ Be aware of how difficult this situation can be for you both.
- ▣ Know that admission can happen fast. Often a decision is needed within 2-4 hours of a vacancy being offered, with admission occurring within days.
- ▣ Know that if your family member is in hospital, they could be transferred immediately to a vacancy at any of your preferred facilities. Ask the facilities to notify you first, so you can support your family member.
- ▣ Seek your GP's advice and support.
- ▣ Learn and use relaxation.
- ▣ Consider [carer counselling](#) to help you through this.

The [Commonwealth Carer Resource Centre](#) can arrange this for you - ph: 1800 242 636\*.

*"The carer counsellor was great.  
She gave me extra support and a listening ear - just what I needed.  
It helped me make sense of things."*

Carers who have been through this believe that by taking care of yourself, you will find the energy needed to deal with some of the difficult tasks ahead.

## Further information:

- ▣ [National Carer Counselling Program](#) - call 1800 242 636.
- ▣ Receive a relaxation tape or CD by ordering a free Carer Support Kit. Phone the Commonwealth Carer Resource Centre on 1800 242 636\*.
- ▣ [Why consider respite in a residential care facility?](#) - information sheet.
- ▣ [The day of admission - what to expect](#) - information sheet.

Contact the [Commonwealth Carer Resource Centre](#) on 1800 242 636\* to request the above information sheets be sent to you - or to find out about other information sheets in this series.

\*Free call except from mobile phones. Mobile calls at mobile rates.

We do our best to keep these links up to date, but the internet changes all the time. If you can no longer access any of the above resources, please go to our [Internet Troubleshooting Guide](#), or email us at [website@carersvic.org.au](mailto:website@carersvic.org.au)