

## Easing the Transition to a Facility

Here are some suggestions that may help to ease the transition of someone with frontotemporal degeneration from home to facility care:

- Enroll the person in an adult day care program for a few months prior to the move to a residential facility. This will help them get used to a group setting and become comfortable with someone other than you caring for them. Stay with the person for the first few days, pretending to have the time of your life and that the staff are close friends.
- When visiting the nursing home and during placement treat the staff like friends to demonstrate these people are to be trusted.
- A day or two before the move, inform them of the pending change. Tell them you need help to take care of them and that they will be going to a new adult program where they will be safe. Be positive and brief. Reiterate the message on the day of the move.
- Do not become overly emotional on the day of the move. They need to see you are confident and comfortable. Your anxiety may precipitate anxiety in them.
- Suggest to the facility administrator that short, controlled visits of 10-15 minutes by you during the first few weeks can ease the patient's anxiety. (Typically, facilities ask family members to wait until after the first weeks to visit until the patient is acclimated.)
- If the person has a history of agitation, consider talking to the physician about a light dose of appropriate medicine 7-10 days BEFORE the placement and a short time after placement. The patient may be confused when they make the move, but not upset and agitated.
- Call before you come to visit so you know what kind of day your loved one is having. If you cannot face their agitation without becoming upset, don't go or go later.
- Ask the aide, rather than the nurse how your loved one is doing. The aide will have the most direct contact with the residents.

- Talk with the staff. Smile. Offer a compliment to at least one of the staff on each visit. There is nothing worse than the family who comes in with their microscope looking for flaws.
- If your loved one is not one to socialize, ask the staff to let them have some time on their own each day and to introduce them slowly to the group.
- Offer to educate the staff about FTD with handouts and resources gathered from your support groups, etc. The staff may need help to understand the finer points of aphasia and FTD behaviors; provide AFTD contact info as a resource for the staff.
- Do not let the adjustment period dissuade you from the placement. Most people make a good adjustment over time.
- Offer yourself as a resource to staff so they aren't left alone feeling unable to care for the new resident. Suggest they call you in case of a new or difficult behavior so you can see the issue and model how to diffuse it.
- Ask staff when you can be most helpful and time your visit to assist them if possible, ie: helping at meal time, providing a 1:1 activity in the evening, etc.
- Prepare yourself to take on a different role in the life of your loved one that does not involve hands-on care. Remember, you are making an adjustment as well.