



HELP *is Here*

When someone you love has dementia

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Foreword by James Patterson, MD



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CHAPTER 3

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT SOON

IS YOUR FAMILY MEMBER SAFE? 31

Once your family member is diagnosed with dementia, think about whether he or she is still safe at home. Consider the dangers in the kitchen, locking guns away in a safe place, and learn why stairs present a danger. Consider whether your family member may be vulnerable to financial fraud. At some point your family member will have to stop driving; learn when that might be and how to approach that topic.

FAMILY ISSUES 39

When a family member is diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease or another dementia, the family has to learn to work together to care for the family member who has dementia. Sometimes this can be difficult, particularly if someone in the family cannot see the changes in the family member with dementia. Learn some ways to deal with this challenging situation.

FORM TWO TEAMS NOW!!! 41

Caring for your family member who has dementia will be a big job, but there are many people who can help you. Discover how to form TWO teams: the first one for your family member, and a second one for yourself. Read about why it’s very important to form **BOTH TEAMS NOW**.

Mrs. Anderson asked her daughter Lucy to take her to the bank so that she could take some money out of her savings account. Lucy asked her mother why, and her mother said that she needed to have some repairs done in the basement where there were radiation beams coming out of the fuse box. Mrs. Anderson said that she had hired a nice man who came to the door and said he was checking all the fuse boxes in the neighborhood and would fix it for \$1000 cash. He was going to come back the next day at 3:00 pm. Lucy recognized that this was a scam and that the man her mother thought was a "nice man" was actually a con artist. Lucy told her mother that she would get the cash herself so that her mother didn't need to make the trip to the bank. Lucy called the police to report the scam and went to Mrs. Anderson's house herself at 3:00 pm the next day and told the man to leave.

Financial Matters: Money Management and Scams

As dementia progresses, it will destroy your family member's ability to do mathematical calculations. A decrease in a person's ability to do calculations and math is an expected part of dementia. Your family member will be less and less able to balance a checkbook, or pay bills appropriately. A person with dementia may forget to pay bills at all, fill in the wrong amount on the check, or properly complete the bills and then forget to mail them. At some point, everyone who has dementia will need someone to take over managing their money matters.

CHAPTER 5

TAKING CARE OF YOU, THE CAREGIVER

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<p>Caring for a family member with dementia can be very stressful. Even if your family member lives with full-time caregivers, being the “go to” person in the family who is responsible for all the decisions, organization and care coordination can make accomplishing the ordinary tasks you must do for yourself very difficult.</p>	
WHY YOU NEED A TEAM	75
<p>You learned in Chapter 3 that it is important to create a team to help take care of your family member, as well as a team for yourself. Usually people create the team for their family member but never get around to creating their own team. Read more about why you should set up your own team NOW.</p>	
THE CREEP FACTOR	77
<p>The Creep Factor is a name for the accumulation of dozens of small stressors that may eventually cause you to become very overstressed at a small thing. Sometimes people think of it as “the straw that broke the camel’s back”. Discover why the Creep Factor is your enemy when you have a family member with dementia.</p>	
WAYS TO FIND HELP FOR YOU.	79
<p>Find out about respite care and ways that can help you, the family caregiver.</p>	
WHEN TO CRY FOR HELP	80
<p>Sometimes caring for a family member with dementia can leave the family caregiver exhausted, stressed and depressed. Know the signs of caregiver burnout, why there may come a time when you owe it to yourself and your family to cry for help, and how to do that.</p>	

TAKING CARE OF YOU, THE CAREGIVER

When a family member is diagnosed with dementia, the entire family suffers a shock and everyone in the family begins grieving, each person in their own way and on their own timeline. Even though the family member with dementia hasn't died, there is no getting around the fact that the family member has been diagnosed with a progressive, incurable disease that can be emotionally traumatic. Dementia can be particularly difficult because families often feel like their family member is slipping away one brain cell at a time, and in some ways the families are right.



While it is very important to care lovingly and compassionately for your family member with dementia - and most of this book is about how to do that - **it is just as important to lovingly and compassionately take care of yourself.** Many studies have shown that having a family member with dementia is extremely stressful, especially for the family caregiver of the family member with dementia. Because dementia is a long journey, this prolonged stress on the family caregiver can have serious consequences for the caregiver's health and happiness. It also can be a strain on other relationships that the caregiver is in due to the demands on the caregiver's time and energy.

That said, there are things that family caregivers can do to protect their health and happiness while they are caring for their family member with dementia. Some of these things SEEM easy, but they actually can be difficult for family caregivers to accomplish. For instance, it SEEMS easy to know that you must take time off for yourself, but this can actually be very difficult for family caregivers.

This chapter is for YOU, the family caregiver. PLEASE read it and use some of the strategies to help yourself on this journey that you are on with your family member who has dementia.