



HOSPICE MESSAGES OF HOPE

*Coping with the Difficulty of Placing
a Loved One in a Nursing Home*

ASSESSING THE SITUATION

The decision to move a loved one to a nursing home may be one of the most difficult decisions you will ever make. For many people, placing their loved one in a nursing home makes them feel like they failed as a caregiver. You are not giving up. You are just getting help.

Caregiver burnout is one of the main reasons a family eventually places a loved one in a nursing home. Many discover they cannot do it all like they thought, or hoped, they could. Many caregivers feel isolated and overextended.

If you are a caregiver, remember that burnout is a real possibility. It is important to reach out and accept support and acknowledge your limitations. Sometimes moving a loved one to a nursing home is best for all involved.

Start the decision making process by asking these questions:

1. Are you finding it difficult to continue hands-on care for your loved one?
2. Do you feel emotionally or chronically drained?

It can be helpful to discuss your situation with a team from hospice, home health or other professional staff. Besides learning about care options for your loved one, you may also learn new ways to cope with your limitations and concerns.

NEEDING HELP

Most people realize at some point, they cannot continue to provide the needed care at home. It can be hard to admit, but you need to recognize when you need help and going to a nursing home may be a necessary option.

Coping with guilt:

1. After you make the decision to place your loved one in a nursing home, remind yourself that you took the steps necessary to ensure your loved one is safe and comfortable and able to get the care and attention they need.
2. Remind yourself you did the best you could do at home for as long as you could. Try to feel good about what you did accomplish at home for the time you were the caregiver.
3. Know that you made the decision you made because you recognized your need for help and what you did was an act of love, wanting the best care for your loved one.
4. Understand you did the unselfish thing by determining what your loved one needed, instead of what made you feel better.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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HEALTHCARE

Positive outcomes:

1. Having more quality time with your loved one because someone else is doing the day-to-day care.
2. Focus on being the spouse, child, grandchild or friend, instead of the caregiver.
3. Catch up on much needed rest and therefore be in better spirits with the time you spend with your loved one.
4. Address your own health needs when there wasn't time before.
5. Have flexibility to develop more balance with your life by re-engaging in activities that you used to do or need to do.

SELECTING A FACILITY

It is important to tour several nursing homes if you are able. Talk to the staff, observe what is going on, and watch how the staff interacts with their residents and each other. When you choose a nursing home, consider respect of the residents there first. You can pick up on the level of respect they provide if you spend time in the home. When you see the staff in action, you will know what nursing home is right for your loved one.

Despite no longer being involved in the 24-hour care, you can still be involved in the care of your loved one after placement. The facility will rely on you for your input about your loved one's health care needs and preferences. If your loved one does not have "decisional capacity" and you are the health care power of attorney, you are still responsible for care and health decisions at the facility.

Remember, God gives wisdom to those who ask for it. Pray for it. God's grace shows up when you ask for it.

OSF Home Care Services is here to support you and wants to meet you wherever you are in your grief journey.

