The Importance of Respite Care

by AMY MANLEY

Respite Care

Alzheimer’s can be a challenging condition for those who face it. While the patient can experience high levels of difficulty in their day-to-day life, those who provide care for the patients can experience the same or greater levels of stress. Due to the complications Alzheimer’s patients face, they will often require care if they are not put into a residential facility, and most often, a loved one is the person providing the care. Once in a while, the caregiver may need a break too to avoid caregiver burnout, and that is when respite care comes in. By learning more about respite care, and how it can help caregivers get a break, you can see if this is something you would be interested in using.

What Is Respite Care?

Before we assess if it is the right situation for you, let's talk about what this type of care is. It is a type of caregiving that is meant to give original caregivers a break, so they do not buckle from exhaustion and stress. This can be done in-home, at a day center or a residential center. Typically, it is whatever is comfortable for the patient and family.

This type of care is for people who have serious illnesses, such as cancer, stroke recovery, or, of course, Alzheimer's. The types of things done within this service are:

- Bathing
- Changing clothes
- Eating or drinking
- Taking medications
- Getting out of bed

Before officiating this type of care, make sure the patient is comfortable with the option and make sure the most suitable type of care is chosen too.

Taking a Break

Let’s face it, everyone needs a break once in a while, and caregivers for those with Alzheimer’s are no different. Luckily, respite care is available for those who need it. This form of care is available for those with Alzheimer’s, and it basically works by taking over where the caregiver left off, allowing them to take a break. Those with Alzheimer’s are provided with a safe environment, where they can be properly care for and get everything they need.

The Importance of Taking a Break

While some people view caregivers taking a break as somewhat of a luxury, it is much more than that. When

caregivers are provided with a much needed break through the use of respite care, the caregivers are able to come back better than before. The ability to take a break from providing care allows those providing the care to take a mental and physical break from it all, which in turn works to strengthen the level of care the provider offers to the patient with Alzheimer's. In most cases, the caregiver will return to the job feeling refreshed, which allows them to provide a higher level of care to the person they are caring for.

How Respite Care Works

Respite care does not only benefit the caregiver, but also offers the patient with Alzheimer's with something new to experience. Rather than spending time within the same environment, respite care offers something new and fresh. The Alzheimer's patient is offered with new living areas and fresh faces, while the caregiver is able to take a break from their demanding position and take some much needed me time. This time allows the caregiver to spend time with other family and friend, spend time resting, or take some time in a new environment as well, where they can come out feeling refreshed. Some people take full advantage of the respite care, while others stop in from time to time, offering a lending hand. Either way, the patient is offered with peace of mind in knowing that the patient they are caring for is getting great care while they are taking some time for themselves.

You can plan ahead to use respite care, or it can be used in case of unexpected emergencies. For example, say you have to fly out of town on short notice, respite care can take over and offer you with coverage in a relatively short period of time. In order to protect yourself during emergencies that need your full attention right away, it is best to have safeguards ready, which are friends or family that can take over in the event of an emergency until respite care can take over for you.