



The  
**Dementia  
Society**  
Ottawa and Renfrew County

# MOVING IN AND MAKING THE TRANSITION: ADJUSTMENT FOR THE CAREGIVER



A move to assisted living or long term care is often very quick. After the move, you and the person you care for must adjust to a new place, new people, and new routines.

Your role as caregiver does not end with the move. Instead, your role changes. At first, you might be unsure about how you fit in. It takes time for the staff to get to know you and the person you are caring for. It also takes time for the person to feel at home and become comfortable.

During a move, you might experience:

- **Stress and exhaustion:** Moving is not easy and it takes energy. Make sure to schedule breaks and take time to decompress after the move.
- **Loss of control:** You must now rely on others to provide care and ensure the person's safety. This might make you feel lost or left out.
- **Anger and resentment:** You might feel angry at other people for not being involved. You might feel angry at staff for not providing the care you expected from them.
- **Guilt:** You might feel guilty if the person is upset by the move.
- **Grief:** You might be grieving the loss of the relationship. You might have lost some companionship or support. There could be loss of a future you expected or hoped for.
- **Complex emotions:** Not all caring relationships are loving ones. You may be harboring resentments. There could still be unresolved issues.

Each person's level of involvement after a move is different. Remember that the relationship you have is unique. Don't compare your caregiving situation to others.

## Tips to help you adjust:

- Laugh together or with others: Humor can be a way to help cope.
- Give structure to your day: Your loved one needs routine to adjust, and so do you.
- Have compassion for yourself: It is okay not to adjust right away.
- Read up on strategies for self care: <https://www.caregiver.org/pilotIntegration/indexPersistent.html?uri=%2Ftaking-care-you-self-care-family-caregivers>
- Explore ways to re-invest your time and energy:
  - Engage in old interests or hobbies. Try new ones.
  - Reconnect with friends and share your experiences with other family members. Seek support for yourself.
  - Join the long term care and retirement home support group for caregivers, <https://mkodsorcwebsiteunago.kinstacdn.com/wp-content/uploads/August-Support-Group-Calendar-Ottawa.pdf>
- Get to know the staff: Learn about the day-to-day routines.
- Get to know the home: Learn about the different areas of the home and the programs/services available.
- Maintain realistic expectations: The home and the staff will not be perfect.

## Your new role might include:

- Communicating openly with the staff: You know the person best. Offer suggestions or show the staff approaches that can help.
- Attending meetings, care conferences, etc.: Work with staff to inform, advise, recommend, and make decisions.
- Volunteering: At meal times, resident activities, etc...
- For more strategies, watch this video on transitioning to long term care: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Qjm6Bu5q6E&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Qjm6Bu5q6E&feature=emb_logo)
  - **Note:** This video focuses on moving to long term care, but the concepts can apply to other moves as well.

To discuss challenges and tailor strategies to your unique situation, reach out to a Dementia Care Coach:

**Ottawa:** 613-523-4004 **Renfrew-County:** 1-888-411-2067 | [info@dsorc.org](mailto:info@dsorc.org) | [DementiaHelp.ca](http://DementiaHelp.ca)

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