



**“Is it right to move my wife into residential care?  
Her dementia is getting harder for me to handle.  
I feel guilty, but I can’t do it anymore.”**

Considering out-of-home care for your spouse can be a difficult decision. Family members often promise to keep an ill loved one at home for as long as possible. But there are many reasons why moving your wife to residential care may not only be necessary, but also the right thing to do.



### **The “right” time is when you need it**

The decision to move your wife to residential care is a very personal one. When her care needs are beyond what you can provide, impact your physical or mental well-being, or compromise her safety, it may be time. If she’s still able to participate, involving your wife in the decision can help her preserve a sense of dignity and autonomy. If you have adult children or other concerned relatives, you may want to initiate a conversation with them as well. In [Home Away from Home](#), we share steps you can take to ease your wife’s transition.



### **Emotions will come—let them**

Moving a loved one to residential care can be emotionally challenging. Allow yourself to feel sad, depressed, angry, disappointed, worried or anxious—but also relieved, peaceful and calm. These feelings are necessary to begin healing. You may also feel a sense of guilt, but please know you did not cause your wife’s illness or her increasing care needs. Read [The Emotional Side of Caregiving](#) to learn more.

As her illness progresses, you may begin to grieve the loss of who your wife used to be. In [Caregiving and Ambiguous Loss](#), we explore the spectrum of grief when caring for someone who is physically present but “not there.” You can also find tips to manage stress and maintain resilience during this transition in [Grief and Loss](#).



### **Explore housing options that meet your needs**

Residential care varies based on the level of care needed, personal preferences, and financial resources. You’ll find a range of options, from smaller licensed family homes caring for 5 or fewer people, to larger multi-floor assisted care residences offering secure memory care. Learn more about different types of residential care in [Residential Care Options: The Right Time](#) and [Housing Options](#).

Once you’ve determined the level of care needed, consider variables like cost, size and location, culture and social activities, meals and special diet accommodations, medical care onsite and access to elevated care as your wife’s dementia progresses.

**If you find a residence you like, do your homework.** It may look nice on the outside, but it’s their policies, practices and staffing retention history that tell the true story. Research resident satisfaction ratings and business stability with MediCare’s [Care Compare](#), [US News ratings](#), [Seniorly](#) and the Better Business Bureau. For more tips on choosing a facility, read [Residential Care Options: Choosing the Right Place](#).



## What happens after you move your wife to residential care?

Caregiving doesn't end, it simply enters a new phase. In our guide, [Caregiving Doesn't End When Your Loved One Moves](#), we discuss the shift in your role as a caregiver, how to support your wife in her new living environment, and how to make the most out of your visits. If your wife moves to memory care, our tips in [Visiting Someone in Dementia Care](#) can help.



## One final note

Family caregivers can experience less burden, and their own well-being may improve after moving a loved one. With your spouse no longer living at home, you may experience loneliness, an empty feeling and the loss of your role as a caregiver. For spouses, making this decision can be particularly hard. It's shaped by personal feelings, a sense of responsibility or obligation, financial realities, and an honest look at what you and your family can manage. Take the time you need to understand your situation, so you can move forward with peace of mind.



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