



Memory LOSS: CREATING A PLAN B

BY PAULA GIBSON

Once your loved one has been diagnosed with Alzheimer’s disease or another form of dementia, Plan A is typically to keep them in their home for as long as possible. However, there may come a time when those walls won’t support their quality of life anymore. Unfortunately, those with dementia do not recognize the need for assistance. This is why families need to formulate a Plan B for where

their loved one might live when their home situation is no longer a good fit.

The first step in the Plan B creation is to ensure that the person with memory loss has healthcare and financial power of attorney (POA) paperwork. This paperwork should name a primary and a secondary person that will assist in making decisions for the

person who cannot make their own. The paperwork does not take effect until two physicians or a physician and a psychologist medically determine the person to be incompetent or unable to make medical decisions for themselves. If the POA paperwork is not in place, it may result in a court proceeding to establish guardianship, which can be costly and take valuable time.

The POA individuals should be involved in creating the Plan B and visit memory care homes that could assist a loved one now and in the future. In doing this, you ensure that if something happens to your loved one or their main care provider, Plan B is in place.

Moving is hard, which can lead to it being pushed off. But if the following signs appear, it’s time to implement Plan B.

- The person with dementia is no longer safe at home. A test could be setting off the fire alarm in the home. If your loved one doesn’t respond appropriately, they shouldn’t be living alone.
- Family is unable to provide the necessary level of care. If caregivers

become short with a person or if helping the loved one could harm them or the caregiver, it’s time to seek assistance.

- The current level of need is too great for family or it’s too difficult to manage others to do it. If your loved one needs 24/7 care, they need reliable people to be there all day, every day, without excuse, absence, or delay.
- Emergency and crisis situations have arisen. Your loved one falls, a caregiver is ill, or worse. Sixty-three percent of caregivers pass before the person they’re caring for.

Sadly, the last item is the most common reason why a Plan B is enacted. Most families wait until a health crisis occurs to create a Plan B, and then wait until another crisis or myriad of concerns happen before enacting it.

Plan A is optimal, but when the walls can’t hug or keep your loved one safe, it’s time to realize that the memories can come with them. The main thing is to ensure that your loved one is safe, supported, and smiling, and that can happen when Plan B is in place.

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