

Dementia

Moving to a residential home is a tough decision and is a difficult time in everyone's life for the individual and their family. The development of dementia in a member of the family is often the cause for families to have to consider doing this. The more we understand about the problem, we can make a decision about future plans with greater confidence. This sheet aims to help families have insight into dementia and how Parkside meets the needs of residents who suffer from symptoms of dementia.

What is dementia?

Dementia is a syndrome (a group of related symptoms) associated with the decline of the brain and its abilities. Symptoms include confusion, mood changes, memory loss and communication problems, although each person will experience the progressive symptoms of dementia in their own way.

Symptoms

Memory loss

Memory loss – particularly short-term memory is the most common early symptom of dementia. Forgetfulness is usually mild at first, but deteriorates over time. The long-term memory is not affected in the same way.

Communication

Dementia causes people to forget simple words or to substitute one word for another. This can make speech or writing hard to understand.

Mood, behaviour and personality changes

Someone with dementia may experience rapid mood swing for no apparent reason. They may become very emotional, and at times be frightened, depressed or angry about having dementia. Delusions and hallucinations can occur.

Disorientation

A person with dementia can feel lost in familiar places such as the road they live in. They may forget where they are or how they got there. They may not believe where they live is home.

At Parkside we aim to create an atmosphere and environment designed to enhance the quality of life of our residents who have dementia and to maintain their dignity. We also aim to help their families deal with their moving to a new home and to feel involved in their care.

We have a unit in the home that caters specially for those who have dementia. The seating area is bright and open with a large window looking out onto the front garden. It is set out in a way that is designed to ensure resident's safety whilst living in a warm and homely atmosphere. The decoration contains pictures and photos designed to help provoke comforting memories of the past. In the corridors and in the different rooms we have signs and pictures helping them orientate themselves, and to understand the function of where they are.

Nutrition

As dementia progresses the person may lose their interest in food. Weight loss can occur as their memory worsens as people forget to eat, or are simply disinterested. At Parkside our daily menu choices ensure that our residents have a balanced nutritious diet. Each resident has a key member of staff dedicated to look after them and to monitor and continually check on their mental, physical wellbeing and ensure nutritional requirements are met. This means that snacks are always available and staff are able to assist residents with eating if they need such help.

Jobs of daily living

It is the requirements of daily living at home that are often the cause of people realising that they need some help. The small basic chores such as getting up and getting dressed, shopping, making a bed, washing clothes and preparing a meal can become overwhelming. By removing the stress of these responsibilities from the individuals and their families Parkside aims to improve the quality of life of everyone concerned, so that they can focus more on enjoying their time together rather than coping with practicalities. Families and friends are welcome to come and visit residents at all times and treat Parkside as their own home whilst with them.

Activities

Whilst the requirements of daily living may become a trial, taking part in physical and social activities can help one feel more independent and maintain a level of self respect. We encourage and assist residents to take part in or perform as many activities of daily living as they would like to or are able to so that they will continue to maintain a meaningful life.