

Waterford Place

Memory Care

A couple of months ago we started a series called “**Living Separate Lives ‘Together’**.” We felt that it was an important subject matter for family and friends of our residents to be introduced to. Many of our residents are living apart from their spouse for the first time in years. This series goes through different subjects like the struggle of separating, what living apart is like for the first few months, different emotions that are felt, how there are changes in the relationship, and how to stay close while living apart. This month we are focusing on emotions of living apart and changes in the relationship.

Emotions

Facing and acknowledging the emotions of living apart is an important element of coping with this new experience and solitude. Caregivers may struggle with feelings they believe are wrong, such as guilt and anger. Feelings of failure or defeat, along with sadness, are all normal responses to this dramatic life change. Grieving for the life and dreams once shared is another predictable response. Ultimately, feelings can be very destructive unless one can learn an alternative way to view and accept their situation.

Nancy fought to hold back the tears when she had to say goodbye to the person her husband “was” and the life they had shared together. She questioned her motives, yet realized that moving her husband to the care facility was actually a “loving decision” and that he would be safe and receive the best of care for his increasing needs.

Betty also realized that life wasn’t ever going to be the same and that this change brought a flood of difficult feelings to the surface. Over time, she recognized that if she were going to survive this change, she would have to embrace it and see it through “new eyes.”

Support groups at the nursing home or care facility, personal counseling, pastoral care and time spent with the family can all contribute to accepting this emotional transition.

Focusing on past memories and grieving openly can also lead to healing the feelings of loss.

HOPE

for Dementia is here

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Changes in the Relationship

When distance and living environments separate a couple, the focus turns to building a different relationship with the spouse. The partnership of marriage does not have to end when one spouse enters a care facility. Instead, new bonds and connections can be made together and the relationship can continue to be nurtured.

Arnie shared that, "She doesn't know me anymore as her husband, but rather as her 'best friend' and someone who cares about her. I am learning to live with that now."

Nancy does not drive, so she is only able to visit her husband once a week. She has found that each visit seems to bring more peace and she is pleased that Jim is beginning to accept his new home. He doesn't recognize her every time and she realizes she is slowly losing him. Nevertheless, she remains involved at a practical level, doing his laundry, helping him with personal hygiene or attending an activity together. She sees these visits, along with her own planning for the future, as her most important responsibilities now.



Waterford Place Memory Care integrates SAIDO Leaning® with a Montessori based life style and an industry leading 6:1 direct care staffing ratio.

Questions? Would you like a tour?

Please contact Kris Hartney,
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