Helpful Attitudes

to help you provide better care for people with Alzheimer’s Disease (AD) and dementia

People with AD are individuals
• AD develops differently in different people. One care plan cannot serve all people with AD.
• Take an interest in each individual
• Knowing people's likes and dislikes helps you manage their behavior
• Be an expert on the people you care for

Work with the symptoms or behaviors you see
• People with AD show different symptoms day to day. Focus on the symptoms and behaviors you see, rather than on the disease
• Notice change in behavior, mood, and independence and report your observations

Be understanding and compassionate
• AD is a devastating mental and physical disorder that affects everyone who surrounds and cares for the one with AD.
• Remember that people with AD do not always have control over their behavior. Don't take their behavior personally
• Think about the symptoms of AD in terms of your own life. How would you feel? How would you want to be treated?
• Assume that people with AD have insight and are aware of the changes in their abilities
• Provide security and comfort
• Provide opportunities for success and personal satisfaction

Work as a team
• People with AD may not distinguish among aides, nurses, or administrators, so be prepared to help when needed.
• Share insights and observations with your team.
• Part of AD care is noticing changes in behavior, or physical and emotional health. Working as a team, more subtle changes will be noticed

Take care of yourself
• Acknowledge that caring for someone with dementia can be emotionally and physically demanding
• Be good to yourself physically, emotionally and spiritually
• Be aware of your body's signals to slow down, rest, or eat better
• Remember that your feelings are real and you have a right to them
• Share your feelings with others, especially those experiencing similar situations
• Use any mistakes as learning experiences

Work with family members
• Family may know things you would have to learn by trial and error.
• Family members can be of great comfort to dementia victims, helping you provide excellent care.
• Suggest environmental changes or modifications as appropriate to the person with AD

Always remember the care program goals
• Providing security and comfort
• Maintaining dignity and self-esteem
• Promoting independence
• Providing assistance with appropriate care and interventions during each stage of the illness

Alzheimer’s Association
24-hour, toll-free Helpline
1-800-272-3900 statewide

Long Term Care Ombudsman Program
1-800-815-0015

Wisconsin Guardianship Hotline
1-800-488-2596