



HELPFUL HINTS

Choosing Adult Day Services

Overview

Family caregivers often find themselves overwhelmed when juggling the responsibility of caring for an older relative with work and day to day family activities and obligations. One important resource for both the caregiver and the individual in need of care is Adult Day Services, also known as Adult Day Centers or Adult Day Health Care.

HELPFUL HINTS: Choosing Adult Day Services, prepared in collaboration with The National Alliance for Caregiving (NAC) and the National Adult Day Services Association (NADSA), will provide families with issues to think about and steps to take when looking at Adult Day Services as a long-term care option.

Key Considerations

1. Determine whether adult day services are right for your family member

Adult Day Services can serve as a cost effective care option for many individuals and their families by providing a full day of interaction with engaging programs, care, and supervision in a social and supportive group environment. Consider it as an option if your family member needs significant amounts of supervision or assistance due to a memory loss or physical illness, is at risk for injury or other safety concerns if left alone for any period of time, or is feeling isolated from others. If your family member is able to participate, it is important to involve him or her in discussions, decisions, and plans for care at each step along the way.

2. Educate yourself

It is first important to understand that Adult Day Services programs may differ in the services they provide. Many offer transportation and most provide social activities, meals, recreation, and some health-related services. Some may offer programs specifically to assist individuals with cognitive disabilities such as Alzheimer's disease. Others, often referred to as Adult Day Health Services, provide more intensive health-related services and therapies for those with significant medical problems or those in need of rehabilitation following an illness or injury.

3. Learn what services are available in your family member's community

To find out what Adult Day Services are available in your family member's area, you can call the National Adult Day Services Association at 1-877-745-1440 or visit their website, www.nadsa.org, which includes a directory of affiliated local programs as well as a guide to choosing an Adult Day Services program. You may also contact the Eldercare Locator, a government sponsored program for finding resources in your area. It can be accessed at www.eldercare.gov or by calling 1-800-677-1116, M-F, 9a.m. – 8p.m. EST.

4. Visit the centers to see which might best meet your family member's needs

Once you have identified Adult Day Services programs in your loved one's area, you may want to start by calling those that appear to be appropriate to meet his or her needs and gather some basic information about their services and

programs. For those that still seem suited to your situation, make an appointment to visit during their hours of operation. Seeing the center firsthand and observing the staff and clients interacting will help you in your decision as to whether or not it will be a right fit for your family member.

5. *Don't be afraid to ask questions*

When visiting an Adult Day Services program, make sure to ask about areas that will be important to your family member's situation and how they are addressed in the center. Raise any concerns you might have. Never worry that you are asking too many questions. Getting the answers you seek is important for both you and your loved one. If you have the opportunity, speak with program participants or their families. Learning about their experience may also help with your decision.

6. *Inform staff of any special needs or concerns your family member may have*

As the caregiver for your family member, you are an important part of the care team and can provide information to help staff at the Adult Day Services program understand your family member's interests, experiences, needs, and preferences. It is also important that they are aware of any special concerns, such as allergies or fears that your family member may have. In this way they will best know how to involve, engage, and assist him or her.

7. *Start slowly to help your family member adjust*

Your family member may be resistant or anxious about attending an Adult Day Services program. This is often related to not understanding what is expected of him or her until a relationship of trust can be established. Starting with a trial period of a few hours a week and gradually working up may be a way to ease the adjustment. You may also consider initially spending some time with him or her at the program. Staff at the program may have suggestions and can serve as a resource for you.

8. *Maintain contact with staff at the center and monitor your family member's adjustment*

Ongoing attention to your family member's reaction to the Adult Day Services program will be important. Ask your family member how he or she feels about the program. If he or she cannot communicate directly, or can't remember, observe for any changes in his or her mood or behavior that may indicate a reaction. Keep in touch with the staff to see how his or her participation has been and visit on occasion, if possible, to see for yourself. Also, be sure to inform the staff of any changes in your family member's health, medications, or mood.

MetLife Mature Market Institute®

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National Adult Day Services Association (NADSA)

NADSA is a membership organization developed for the purpose of advancing the success of its members through advocacy, education, technical assistance, research, and communication services. It serves as the leading voice for the diverse Adult Day Services community.

National Alliance for Caregiving

Established in 1996, the National Alliance for Caregiving, www.caregiving.org, is a nonprofit coalition of national organizations that focuses on issues of family caregiving across the life span. The Alliance was created to conduct research, do policy analysis, develop national programs, and increase public awareness of family caregiving issues.

