

## The Client

*Barbara wasn't the only one living with Lewy body dementia—her husband Richard was, too. Because even though Richard's mind wasn't ravaged by memory loss, sleep problems, and hallucinations, his wife's was. Which meant Richard suffered right by her side.*

## The Challenge

Lewy Body Dementia is the second most common type of progressive dementia after Alzheimer's, caused by protein deposits on the nerve cells responsible for thinking, memory, and movement. When Barbara first came to Tender Rose, she'd been misdiagnosed with Alzheimer's and Parkinson's, a combination that causes similar symptoms. The real challenge, though, wasn't correcting her diagnosis; it was her care.

Intensely private, Barbara wanted only her husband to help with grooming, medication, and daily activities. But her agitation and violent behavior caused her to attack Richard whenever she was unsure of something—which was often. Needing to use the bathroom, for example, could set her off on a biting, kicking, hitting rampage. She'd also keep Richard up all night "protecting" her from the intruders of her hallucinations. And since Richard didn't know much about Lewy body dementia, he felt he had no choice but to let Barbara attack him.

After a year and a half of his wife's violence and hallucinations, Richard was exhausted: emotionally, physically, and spiritually. He was understandably swayed by the well-meaning advice of his son and daughter-in-law, who pushed him hard to put Barbara in a facility. "It's best for her," they told him. "And it's best for you, Dad."

## The Solution

Ultimately, Richard stood up for the wife he loved so much. Despite the cost. Despite the fear. Despite the worry. Despite everything, Richard knew that avoiding



a facility was the best thing for his wife. When Richard and Barbara came to Tender Rose for help, we worked hard to establish a relationship not just with Barbara, but with Richard too. Armed with no knowledge about the disease but with a fierce love for his wife, Richard was an enabler. We had to convince him that allowing his wife to attack him didn't work. And that together we needed to find new approaches that did work.

We began by identifying Barbara's triggers and finding ways to redirect her. When she hallucinated gaping holes in the carpet for example, she could be calmed by a promise to fill them. When she saw intruders, we promised to hide her. And most importantly, we found ways to redirect her with activities she loved and kept her engaged, like cleaning the deck with tweezers, something Barbara could enjoy for hours at a time.

## The Outcome

For 14 months after coming to Tender Rose, Barbara had the highest possible quality of life. She was able to rebuild her damaged relationship with her kids. Richard gave her back the pleasure of gardening in the sun and taking her grandkids to the creek. And he gave them both back their marriage.