

The Client

The Nelsons never had kids but they do have a fur baby named Jessie. When we met their dog, Jessie, she hadn't been bathed in years. She was severely overweight with skin infections, rotting teeth and kidney disease. But according to Mrs. Nelson, Jessie was just fine!

Everything, in fact, was "fine." Like when she and her husband drove without a license. Or when Mr. Nelson refused his medication and gave his wife the wrong dosage. Or when Mrs. Nelson became addicted to her asthma inhaler.

It was all fine.

Luckily, the Nelsons were surrounded by conscientious professionals who recognized that everything wasn't fine after all.

The Challenge

Both suffering from dementia, the Nelsons desperately needed care but had no close family to help. Their health, house and finances were in disarray. Mrs. Nelson was paying the bills (the same bills, over and over again). Mr. Nelson's aphasia caused financial errors as well. He refused medication for his liver transplant and sunk deep into depression, sleeping all day.

Mrs. Nelson, who suffered from anxiety, was addicted to her asthma inhaler, which can cause heart attacks.



She was also dependent on Benadryl, which negatively interacted with other meds. The house was filthy, the same sponge used on the dishes, the floor, even the dog. On top of it all, both the Nelsons were controlling, stubborn and scared, resulting in verbal abuse and deeper depression.

The Solution

They say it takes a village to raise a child. Sometimes it also takes a village to help a couple living with dementia. After Mrs. Nelson was treated for breathing problems at the hospital, the discharge planner didn't feel comfortable releasing her to Mr. Nelson's care, so she called us. As Power of Attorney, the couple's friend, Roger, was critical to initiating and funding our work. And the Nelsons' primary care doctor referred them to a fiduciary.

Together, our surrogate family worked together to bring quality of life back to the couple.

While the fiduciary untangled the couple's finances and the doctor focused on medication, we worked on another pressing issue: unlicensed driving. We hid the Nelsons' car keys, made sure the house was always well stocked, and convinced them that our driving services were a luxury to be enjoyed.

Next, we tackled Mrs. Nelson's addictions. We asked the pharmacy to stop selling Mrs. Nelson Benadryl. We also found a placebo inhaler to provide immediate oral satisfaction without side effects. Those changes alone lowered her anxiety.

With Mr. Nelson, we focused on his depression. We knew we needed to interrupt his sleep cycle with an activity he'd enjoy, so we began taking him to massage appointments, acupuncture and exercise classes. We also take him to see a neurologist regularly at the local memory and aging center.



When it comes to the couple's relationship, our Memory Care Professionals double as marriage counselors, helping the couple communicate, intervening when necessary, and creating a buffer for Mr. Nelson, who requires more patience than his wife can always give.

The Outcome

The Nelsons were two vulnerable people, alone in a house with no family, no oversight, and no way to manage their rapid decline into dementia. Together, Tender Rose and other professionals worked to solve the couple's challenges. Today, their relationship is stable, their finances and house are in order, they're no longer driving, and their health and quality of life has returned. And Jessie? She's bathed regularly by a groomer who makes house calls. She gets medication for her health issues. She sees a vet every three months. And now she really is just fine.

If someone you know with dementia is refusing care, needs medical help or has no quality of life, call us. We'll help you find a solution.

Call (415) 340-3990 or visit www.TenderRose.com

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