

*OLD COLONY HOSPICE &  
PALLIATIVE CARE*

Presents

*Forget me not*

*A program of interventions for Late Stage  
Dementia Patients and their care-givers.*





## *Forget Me Not*

*Most people think that "hospice is hospice" no matter what the diagnosis. At Old Colony Hospice we believe that each diagnosis needs specific intervention. This has never been more apparent than with our Late Stage Alzheimer's Disease or Dementia patients. Within this program we will look to engage patients and families through the use of meaningful interventions, education and caring.*

## *Definitions:*

**What is Dementia?** We all forget things as we get older. Many older people have a slight loss of memory that does not affect their daily lives. When memory loss gets worse, it may mean something more serious. Dementia is a loss of mental skills that affect your daily life. It can cause problems with memory and the ability to think and plan. Usually dementia gets worse over time. How long this takes is different for each person. Some people can stay the same for years. Others lose skills quickly. Unfortunately chances of having dementia increase with age. Thankfully, this doesn't mean everyone will be affected by dementia. It is rare for patients to be diagnosed with dementia before age 60. But, after age 85, studies have shown up to half of all adults have it.

**What causes Dementia?** Dementia is caused by damage to or changes in the brain. Alzheimer's Disease is the most prevalent form of dementia where 'plaques and tangles' build up in the brain tissue. After Alzheimer's Disease, strokes are the next most common cause of dementia. This type of dementia is called vascular dementia. Diseases, such as Parkinson's disease, dementia with Lewy bodies, and frontotemporal dementia are other categories of dementia.

**What are the symptoms of Late Stage Dementia?** Over time, people with dementia may begin to act very differently. They may become scared and strike out at others, or they may become clingy and childlike. In the later stages, they cannot take care of themselves. They may not know where they are. They may not know their loved ones when they see them. Eventually the body's major systems lose ability to work as they used to.

**How is it treated?** In the early and mid stages there are medicines that can be used slow the progression of dementia. However, as dementia worsens, a person may get depressed or angry and upset. Early and mid-stage treatments may no longer be effective. In the true late stages we try to promote the thought of 'Habilitation' versus what most of us know as 'Rehabilitation'.

**Habilitation:** Habilitation is different from rehabilitation. In Habilitation, we are no longer focusing on what abilities have been truly lost to the dementia, but rather making the most of what faculties remain and embracing them. This method is much less frustrating for the patients and families struggling with the dementia, and it can help to minimize some of the tough times that come along with the disease progression.

**Questions? Call: 1-(781)-341-4145, We are happy to help you.**

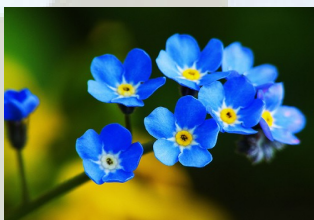
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## *Tough Spots:*

**Sundowning:** Although there is no established definition, sundowning is widely used to describe a group of behaviors occurring in some older patients with or without dementia at the time of nightfall or sunset. These behaviors include confusion, anxiety, agitation, or aggressiveness with increased motor activity like pacing, wandering, resistance to redirection, and increased verbal activity such as yelling. Although some of these behaviors are also exhibited in dementia, delirium, and sleep disturbance, sundowning distinguishes itself from these conditions in that these disruptive behaviors are characteristically worse in the evening hours.

**Restlessness | Insomnia:** The person you care for has probably spent most of their life occupied with different activities, such as work-related, household or recreational activities. As Alzheimer's Disease progresses, they are less likely to be able to perform the tasks they once did and, as a result, have fewer activities with which to occupy their time. The person you care for may be restless and impatient for a variety of reasons. They may be bored, they may have excess energy or they may be anxious about something. Signs of restlessness include: repetitive motions such as pacing, aimless wandering, often triggered by a feeling of pain or boredom or some distraction in the environment.

**Feeding and Bathing:** As most dementias progress into the later stages, feeding and bathing may become increasingly frustrating for both loved one and caregiver. It is important to know that this is part of a disease progression and outbursts or refusal of care shouldn't be taken personally. The act of bathing (particularly showering) can often overload the central nervous system of patients with dementia and be very frightening. Feeding can also be difficult as the muscles involved in chewing and swallowing are no longer working properly.



## *Interventions To Help Minimize Tough Spots:*

**Touch:** Compassion thru touch can take form in just holding hands or giving massage. Just because loved ones under our care aren't responding to us the way they used to, they can still feel that we are with them. Our staff is trained in '**compassionate touch for the elderly**'. This type of massage can help to maintain skin integrity while loosening up arthritic hands and joints.

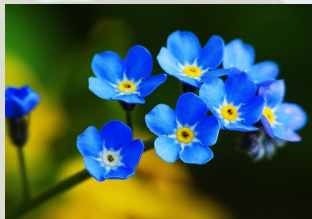
**Music:** Music that is specific to a person can help with restlessness, anxiety, and other difficult behaviors. Rote memory and music can still remain intact in the brain, music specific to someone can still register in people with Alzheimer's Disease and can take them to a place and time that was 'good'.

**Memory Box:** Just because someone can't tell us who they were before Alzheimer's we can still celebrate their life and let others know who our loved one is and what is important to them. When appropriate, Old Colony Hospice will put together a shadow box that echo's that person's life.

**Advanced Feeding Techniques:** All staff at Old Colony Hospice are trained in advanced feeding techniques that help to maximize intake and minimize pocketing, choking and aspiration of food and drink. As Alzheimer's Disease progresses eating and drinking can become very difficult, using specific techniques and tools can help make this an easier time.

**Bathing Techniques:** Sometimes, bathing can be scary for someone with Alzheimer's Disease. There are certain techniques and do's and don'ts that can make bathing easier for caregivers and loved ones.

**Care Blanket:** Our loved ones with Alzheimer's Disease live a less active lifestyle and may become cold; and at other times become agitated. Blankets can help to maintain body heat to a person who is slowing down. Blankets can also provide 'Weight', which is proven to soothe the central nervous system (therefore treat agitation).



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## *Participating in Care*

Caregivers may experience difficulty finding ways to participate in the care for their loved one. Here is a short list of simple activities that may help you connect with your loved one during this difficult time.

- Read aloud
- Listen to music together
- Look at family photographs
- Read the newspaper
- Sing holiday songs
- Take a wheel chair ride
- Have a friend bring a pet to visit
- Fold towels
- Sort items
- Sing favorite hymns
- Give a manicure
- Rub in hand lotion
- Remember famous people
- Finish nursery rhymes

## *Pre-Bereavement / Anticipatory Grief:*

We are all aware that, unfortunately, there is a final physical death of our loved ones. But there is also a point where our loved one no longer recognizes us or our history together. The feelings of grief and loss can sometimes rise well before the physical death of our loved one, and these feelings should be acknowledged through pre-bereavement counseling.

## *A Word About Old Colony Hospice*

Old Colony Hospice is a Medicare Certified, CHAP Accredited Non-Profit Hospice servicing your area for over 32 years. It is the mission of Old Colony Hospice to bring high quality end of life care to people (and their families) living with a terminal diagnosis by using an interdisciplinary team of Nurses, Social Workers, Chaplains, Home Health Aides, Physicians, and Volunteers.

*Notes and Correspondence:*

Lined area for notes and correspondence, featuring a background of light purple flowers.

# Old Colony Hospice



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& PALLIATIVE CARE**

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