



Why Caregiver Don't Use Adult Day Services?

Social workers, casemanagers and other professionals in the field of aging are preparing for a significant increase in the senior population as baby boomers come of age.

Adult day service centers have been operating in Illinois since the late 1970's, yet they remain one of the "best kept secrets" in home and community-based services. Now is the time for adult day services to take its place as a major community resource for people who need assistance but wish to remain in their homes for as long as possible.

Professionals who work in adult day services (ADS) daily witness the positives effects this service has on customers and their caregivers such as creating new friendships, increased quality of life, peace of mind and optimal functional capacity. Recent studies have demonstrated that former ADS participants with dementia have a smoother transition into residential care. Research also supports the claim that attendance in ADS can actually delay placement in long term care institutions.

If this a such a great resource; why then are caregivers reluctant to choose adult day services?

- ❖ **Adult Day Service is misunderstood:** Caregivers think of it as a "baby sitting service" rather than a therapeutic program offering treatment to their loved one. Programs include but aren't limited to health monitoring, medication supervision, exercise programs, assistance with personal care, recreational activities, lectures, discussions, reminiscence groups, meals and snacks, special events, outings and transportation.
- ❖ **Caregivers can't acknowledge the need for therapeutic care:** Often caregivers have difficulty coming to terms with their loved ones disease process or increased need for care. Enrollment in ADS requires acknowledging that the level of care has gone beyond what they are able to provide. The impairment becomes "real" for them.

- ❖ **Caregivers are often concerned about finances:** Caregivers often do not understand financial ramifications of CCP programs/Medicaid and can become easily intimidated by the paper work. Participants often feel a desire “to leave their family members an inheritance” and are afraid of Medicaid restrictions on their estate.
The cost of care may seem like more than they can handle. It is important to explore all third party payment sources with them. The ADS provider in your area may have contracts with the VA or DHS(ORS). It is also becoming more common for ADS participants to have long term care insurance benefits that pay a per diem for ADS.
- ❖ **Caregivers fear that care will not be good enough:** It is difficult to need help. Caregiver stress/burnout is the number one reason that loved ones are transitioned to more restrictive care. There is a fine balance between sharing the care giving responsibility and trying not to “replace” their role in care giving. ADS is a partner in care giving and often provides support groups as an educational component to care
- ❖ **Establishing a new routine can be intimidating to caregivers:**
Changes in routine can be difficult for all of us. Caregivers and participants undergo an adjustment period. It will take time for the caregiver and the ADS participant to adjust to a new routine. The staff at the day center will offer support to both during the initial weeks of attendance.
Some caregivers (especially spouses) will need to adjust to having “free time.” Providing care has consumed their lives and they are afraid they won’t know how to get back into their life.
- ❖ **Caregivers experience difficulty becoming the decision-maker:**
As the care recipient becomes more impaired roles change. Adult children and spouses become uncomfortable with the role reversal they experience when they are put in a position to make decisions for loved ones.
Sometimes a barrier to ADS enrollment may be the caregivers themselves. ADS professionals work hard to create an atmosphere of acceptance and individualized support for caregivers and are always available to share their expertise.

ADS takes a “one stop shopping” approach to senior care and can **maximize** services with **minimal** accessibility issues to both caregivers and participants. This participant-centered approach creates a setting that attempts to accommodate diversity of skills levels, culturally specific preferences and individual needs.

If you have any further questions about ADS please contact an ADS professional in your area.