

Selecting an Adult Day Service Program

Adult Day Service (ADS) programs can offer a safe, positive, caring, and relatively low-cost alternative to long term placement of persons with dementia. These programs are designed to help people stay mentally and physically active, reduce isolation, improve their health, and prevent decline of their abilities.

Recent studies have shown that the use of ADS programs benefits both the caregiver and person with dementia. Caregivers gain necessary caregiver respite time and people with dementia show improvements in behavior, mood and sleep (Steven H. Zarit. The Effects of Adult Day Services on Family Caregivers' Daily Stress, Affect, and Health: Outcomes From the Daily Stress and Health (DaSH) Study. The Gerontologist. June 2013).

Services vary from center to center, but generally include therapeutic and recreational activities, transportation to and from the center, nutritious meals, and socialization -- all offered in a welcoming environment by trained staff that support and supervise all activities. Some programs are available specifically for people with early-stage memory loss.

There are two models:

- The Social Model (Adult Day Centers) provides supervised social and educational activities, that can include exercise, meals, walks, special events, nutrition, music, arts and crafts, guest speakers and family counseling.
- The Medical Model (Adult Day Health Centers) offers all services provided in the Social Model, plus medical and nursing care and is appropriate for participants who have medical complications in addition to dementia.

STEP 1 – Decide What You Need

Decide what you and your person with the diagnosis want from attending the adult day center.

What does the care recipient want or need?

- A safe, secure environment
- Social activities
- Nutritious meals and snacks
- Exercise
- Mental stimulation
- Assistance with eating, walking, toileting
- Therapies – physical, speech, occupational

What do you, as their care partner, want or need?

- Occasional free time
- Transportation assistance
- Emotional Support
- Assistance in planning for future care needs

STEP 2 – Find a Program Near You

Identify the services in your area.

- Contact Alzheimer's Orange County at 844.373.4400 for a listing of Orange County ADS centers.
- Call ADS centers and ask for information, brochures, eligibility, a monthly activity calendar, menu, and fee schedule and application procedures.

STEP 3 – Know What to Ask

- Days and hours of operation
- Is transportation available? Cost?
- Cost of ADS services. Are discounts or scholarships available?
- Number of staff per participant ratio
- Staff credentials. Language capabilities of staff.
- Activities provided. Is there a variety?
- Does the staff receive specialized dementia training? Do they have experience working with people with memory loss?
- Other special populations served at the center?
- Can people who wander be safely supervised?

We can help!
Alzheimer's Orange County
Call 844.373.4400
For more caregiver tips
Visit us at
www.alzoc.org/resources

STEP 4 – Schedule a Visit

After reviewing materials, schedule an appointment to visit two or more centers that might meet your needs. Feel free to ask questions, such as:

- Did someone spend time finding out what you want and need?
- Did they present information clearly about services and activities at the center?
- Was the facility clean and pleasant with comfortable sturdy furniture?
- Did you see cheerful faces on staff and participants?
- Were participants involved in activities and if not, were staff attentive to these individuals?

STEP 5 – Try It Out

Select a day center. Try it for a month. It usually takes several weeks for participants to feel comfortable in a new setting and with a new routine. If you have questions or are experiencing problems, ask for a meeting with staff. They may have suggestions to make the transition easier.

STEP 6 – Take Care of Yourself

Relax. Your loved one is being well cared for. Remember, your loved one may not be able to recall all the activities enjoyed during the day. The staff will gladly provide the missing details. Communication is a key. Ask the center about:

- Support Groups
- MedicAlert® +Safe Return®
- Caregiving Tips & Education
- Other Community Resources