



Signs Your Loved One May Be Suited for Long-term Care Living

In 2011, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported more than 51,000 occupied beds in New Jersey's long-term care centers. Some experts attribute the larger national influx of nursing home residency to increasing life expectancy rates, the byproduct of advanced technologies and progressive medical care.

In response to this overall rising tally of residents, Roosevelt Care Centers' Licensed Social Worker Englide Cajuste noted some of the signs and symptoms that a loved one or family member may be in need of around-the-clock care.

A few key indicators include: memory loss, multiple falls, repetitious questions, mobility issues, overlooking important dates and events, the inability to cook, skipping meals, forgetting medication, poor hygiene and wearing the same clothes day-in and day-out. "If there's any doubt, I'd say closely monitor their behavior and activities and above all, make sure safety is not an issue – that they are hydrating, eating and taking their medications as prescribed by the doctor," Cajuste said. "I always suggest making a list of pros and cons for long-term care versus independent living; but ultimately, the focus needs to be on safety."

Factoring in Guilt and Fear

All too often, the individuals who are pivotal to making these life-altering admission decisions are the same ones forced to process the associated feelings of fear and guilt. "It's completely normal to feel this way – everyone goes through it," Cajuste explained. "There's a lot of anxiety when you entrust the care of a loved one to strangers. My best advice is to get to know the staff. In many cases, as time moves forward, you build a level of trust. For some, these nurses even become like extended family."

Routinely seeing the emotional struggles of long-term care residents' family and friends, Roosevelt's staff established a caretaker's support group some years back. At these monthly meetings, relatives, companions and friends can discuss their feelings and seek advice from others who are coping with similar burdens.

If in fact long-term care does become the most viable option, Cajuste recommends family and friends make regular calls and visits or even write letters or journal entries to their loved one.

"This gives everyone involved peace of mind, which is in fact what we aim for here in our daily work," she said.

For more information or to reach Roosevelt Care Center's admissions staff for either the Edison or Old Bridge facility, call 732-906-8360 or log onto www.rooseveltcarecenter.com.