



# BAI Beacon

*The Newsletter from Family and Community Services  
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## When the Care Partner Goes Away

At some point while caring for a person with dementia, the caregiver may need time away and the person with dementia is no longer able to handle the demands of travel. A special event, family illness or funeral in another state are common reasons for the caregiver to travel. Sometimes the caregiver is the one who requires care as illness strikes, surgery is required and a hospital stay and/or recovery is necessary. For some, the demands of daily caregiving result in a much needed respite for the caregiver in order to carry on. Planning for any of these situations is essential as one of these scenarios is likely to occur. Here are some strategies that are helpful in planning ahead.

- Non-emergency trips – Begin to plan well ahead of time and give yourself permission and time away to participate in important life events and celebrations OR to take time off from caregiving duties to rejuvenate and care for yourself.

First, limit discussions about your plans with your person. Discussing your plans will likely increase the person's anxiety resulting in repetitive questions, insisting he/she join you on the trip, convincing you that you should not go, or insisting on staying home alone (when you know this is not an option). This is likely to result in you believing that you indeed cannot get away!

Second, begin discussions about the upcoming trip with family members. Don't be afraid to ask if a family member is available to come to your home to stay or if your person can stay in their home. If an out-of-state family member offers their home for the person, remember that the person with dementia must NOT fly unaccompanied and will need a travel companion.

If family members are not an option, learn about community resources including in-home care or respite care in a facility. There are numerous home-care agencies that provide both companion care and live-in service. Your person is likely to need 24/7 coverage while you are away. Begin to interview a couple of home-care companies well in advance to find the best fit for you and your loved one. Be sure to determine if in-home care can meet the unique needs of your person and that staff has been trained in the essentials of dementia care. Plan to start the companion prior to your trip to allow your person to get familiar with the new caregiver.

For some, in-home care may not be the best option. In that case, there are a number of residential care settings (e.g. assisted living and memory care) that provide respite care. These are temporary stays that will require some pre-planning as sometimes a room may not be available. Additionally, the facility will need health records and a current TB skin test for the short-term stay. You can treat this like a hotel stay for your person and let them know this is only a brief stay.

- Emergencies – One of the problems with emergencies is their unpredictable nature; yet you can do something to plan in advance should something occur. The first, most important thing is to acknowledge that an emergency could happen. Evaluate your age and medical status. Do you have a chronic condition that might flare up and require hospitalization or even days in bed? Examples include conditions such as osteoporosis, cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

Second, think about what you do to care for your person with dementia. Do you have to prepare the meals? Monitor medications? Direct or help with personal care? Monitor for safety? Provide continual reassurance? What could you reasonably expect your person to do without direction?



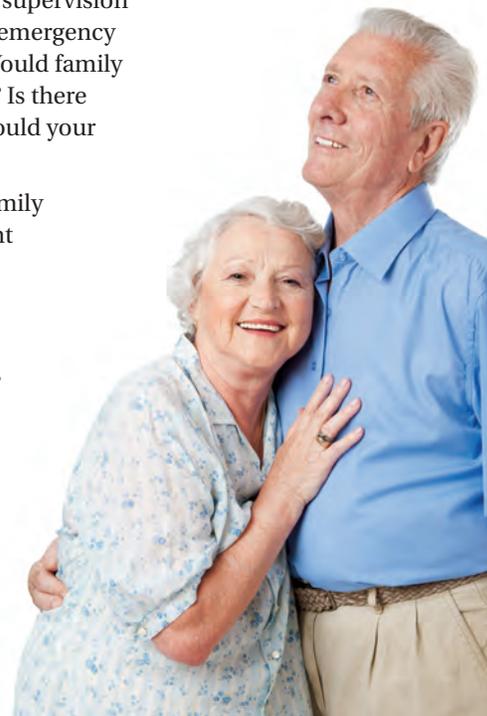
## When the Care Partner Goes Away *(Continued)*

Third, evaluate your resources realistically. Do not expect neighbors to provide supervision or care. Take inventory of your family members: Would/could they come in an emergency or take the person into their home? How long would it take them to get here? Would family agree to stay with your person – not just checking on them once or twice a day? Is there an assisted living facility with beds for emergency respite stays in your area? Would your family know your preferences for getting respite care and how to initiate care?

Now is the time to put together a plan should an emergency occur. Talk with family members. Look at local resources and options for emergency respite placement should the worst occur.

- Outline the person's routine – whether a planned trip or an unexpected emergency, people stepping in to fill your shoes will need to know what the person needs! Write out what a typical day is like at home. Keeping the person's routine will help him/her remain comfortable. Keep an updated list of medications along with the person's primary care physician and specialists' phone numbers. Finally, let those helping you out know about the person's favorites, including food, activities, topics for discussion, distracters when upset occurs, etc.

With a well thought out plan, it is possible for caregivers to get away and know that their person is well cared for while the caregiver's focus is on celebration, relaxation or self-care.



### Ask The Expert

**Mary Lou Hernandez, LCSW**  
Social Worker

Dear Mary Lou:

I have just learned that my dearest friend is dying. I feel that I need to go and say goodbye. My husband who has had dementia for the past three years insists he can stay alone – but I know that he can't. He would not be able to get his medicines or food to eat. He wouldn't bathe and would be terribly frightened if I am not home as he will forget where I have gone. My family can't help. I am thinking about a temporary placement in assisted living memory care. How do I arrange that? Will Medicare pay for that?

Signed,  
Fran

Dear Fran:

I am sorry to hear about your friend's health status and glad that you are taking this opportunity to spend time with her to celebrate her life. Respite placements are a good way of getting help and to begin the transition of allowing others to provide personal care and connection for your husband while you are away. Many assisted living facilities and memory care communities provide respite care, particularly when they have empty beds or rooms available. Unfortunately, Medicare does not cover the cost of residential care – this will be a private-pay situation for you.

Here is how you can begin your search. If in the greater Phoenix area, you can contact the Family and Community Services team at Banner Alzheimer's Institute to obtain a list of facilities in your area. The Area Agency on Aging is another source to ask for suggestions and you can find one in your area by visiting [www.n4a.org](http://www.n4a.org). Many caregivers who are involved in support groups often find options and tips for using residential respite care from other caregivers. Finally, the Alzheimer's Association provides an online option for caregivers that will connect you with services in your area. You can connect to this site by visiting [www.communityresourcefinder.org](http://www.communityresourcefinder.org).

## **Ask The Expert** *(Continued)*

Once you have identified a number of facilities, call and schedule an appointment to visit. Make sure you have your husband's medication list, important medical information and health directives up to date and completed to provide to the setting you choose. It is also important that they know who your husband is and what brings him pleasure so they can help him settle in more quickly while you are away.

I am confident that you will find a location that is right for your husband and that he will do well during your trip. While this is a stressful transition for most caregivers, we have learned that most people with dementia thrive during these respite stays; some decide they'd like this to be their new home; and caregivers learn that it is possible to plan to get away every now and then. I wish you a very memorable time with your friend.

Mary Lou Hernandez

## **Have a Question?**

To submit your question for future consideration  
email us at:  
[baiinfo@bannerhealth.com](mailto:baiinfo@bannerhealth.com)

### **Beacon Beacon Bits**

#### **Making Music / Making Memories**

Friday, July 5, 10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.  
Pyle Adult Recreation Center  
655 E. Southern Ave., Tempe  
Call (602) 839-6850 for more information.  
Registration not required.

#### **Support Group For Lewy Body Dementia & Related Conditions**

Friday, July 5, 12:30 p.m. - 2 p.m.  
Banner Alzheimer's Institute,  
Third Floor Conference Room  
901 E. Willetta Street, Phoenix  
Call (602) 839-6850 for more information.  
Registration not required.

#### **Circle of Friends Support Group RISE to Yoga for People with Dementia**

Thursday, July 11, 10:30 a.m. - noon  
Third Floor Conference Room  
901 E. Willetta Street, Phoenix  
Support group free. \$10 fee for Yoga  
Call (602) 839-6850 for more information.  
Registration not required.

#### **GPS Lecture:**

#### **Important Discussions and Decisions Faced During Dementia**

Friday, July 12, 10:30 a.m. - noon  
Banner Gateway Medical Center  
1900 N. Higley Rd., Gilbert  
Free but registration is required.  
Call (602) 230-CARE to register.

#### **COMPASS Class for Caregivers**

Thursday, July 18, 10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.  
and  
Monday, July 29, 4 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.  
Banner Alzheimer's Institute,  
Third Floor Conference Room  
901 E. Willetta Street, Phoenix  
Free but registration required.  
Call (602) 839-6850 to register.

#### **West Valley Events**

#### **COMPASS Class for Caregivers**

Friday, July 26, 10 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.  
Banner Sun Health Research Institute  
Building B, Morin Auditorium  
10515 W. Santa Fe Drive,  
Sun City, 85381  
Free but registration is required.  
Call (602) 230-CARE to register.



Banner Alzheimer's Institute

Banner Health  
901 East Willetta Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85006

## **Beacon Bits** *(Continued)*

### **With Art in Mind**

Every Thursday, July 11, July 18,  
July 25, 12:30 p.m. – 2 p.m.  
Banner Alzheimer's Institute,  
First Floor Education Center  
901 E. Willetta St., Phoenix  
Registration encouraged.  
\$10 per person, payable at the door  
Call (602) 839-6850 for more information.

### **Planning Ahead**

Thursday, July 25, 10 a.m.– noon  
Banner Alzheimer's Institute,  
Third Floor Conference Room  
901 E. Willetta Street, Phoenix  
Free but registration required.  
Call (602) 839-6850 to register.

### **Adult Children Support Group**

Tuesday, July 30, 5:15 p.m.– 6:30 p.m.  
Banner Alzheimer's Institute,  
Third Floor Conference Room  
901 E. Willetta Street, Phoenix  
Call (602) 839-6850 for more information  
Registration not required.

### **GPS Lecture: Important Discussions and Decisions Faced During Dementia**

Friday, Aug. 9, 10:30 a.m. – noon  
Ahwatukee Recreation Center  
Free but registration is required.  
To register, call (602) 230-CARE

## **Brain Health Tip:**

Being involved in leisure activities appears to be a protective factor in reducing the risk of Alzheimer's disease. Researchers believe that these activities add to cognitive reserve and contribute to our ability to develop new life roles which in turn allow us to enjoy life, have fun and feel appreciated.

## **Our Mission**

To end Alzheimer's disease without losing a generation, to set a new standard of care for patients and their families, and to forge a model of collaboration in biomedical research.