

Dementia Caregiving: The First 90 Days

What to set up after a diagnosis — companion to “Caring for a parent with dementia.”

Month 1 — Stabilize

- ☐ Get the diagnosis specifics in writing: type of dementia, stage, medications considered
- ☐ While your loved one can still participate: complete healthcare POA, financial POA, and advance directive
- ☐ Do a home safety pass: stove, meds, car keys, wandering risks, throw rugs
- ☐ Tell the 3–5 people who most need to know — secrecy isolates you both

Month 2 — Build the routine

- ☐ Establish consistent daily rhythms — routine reduces confusion and agitation
- ☐ Simplify choices (two shirt options, not a closet)
- ☐ Start a behavior log: what happened, time of day, what preceded it
- ☐ Contact the Alzheimer's Association 24/7 Helpline (1-800-272-3900) — free, any dementia type

Month 3 — Build YOUR support

- ☐ Join a dementia caregiver support group (in person or online)
- ☐ Arrange one recurring respite block per week — non-negotiable
- ☐ Learn the communication basics: don't argue with the disease, redirect instead of correct
- ☐ Meet with an elder law attorney about long-term care planning — the 5-year Medicaid clock matters here

What I'm noticing (bring to the next appointment)

Every dementia is different. This checklist is general guidance — your loved one's care team sets the medical plan.

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