



Humboldt Senior Resource Center

Adult Day Health & Alzheimer's Services

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1901 California Street
Eureka, California 95501
Phone (707) 444-8254 FAX (707) 444-3581
H.S.R.C. (707) 443-9747

Supporting seniors in maintaining health, dignity, and self determination

Adult Day Care Works for People with Alzheimer's Disease

People with Alzheimer's disease need increasing structure, support, and personal assistance as the disease progresses. Adult day care is one of the best care settings for the mid-stage individual living in the community.

As compared to non-users, caregivers of Alzheimer's disease patients using adult day services report:

- fewer difficult-to-manage care recipient behaviors and less time spent managing these symptoms (Gaugler et al., 2003a)
- fewer hours managing memory difficulties and impairments in activities of daily living and, consequently, less burden, worry, and strain (Gaugler et al., 2003b)
- fewer recreational restrictions and conflicts between caregiving and other responsibilities (e.g., job requirements, family needs) (Schacke & Zank, 2006);
- a better relationship with the affected individual (Dziegielewski & Ricks, 200); and
- lower levels of depression, anger, and perceived overload and strain (Zarit, Stephens, Townsend, & Greene, 1998).

To achieve these benefits, the Alzheimer's disease patient would ideally attend adult day services at least two days per week for an extended period of at least three months. This frequency has also been found to result in significantly less caregiver burden (Zarit et al.).

Sustained use of adult day services can delay nursing home placement, particularly when started early (Zarit, et al.). When nursing home placement does occur, previous use of adult day services may attenuate the cognitive decline associated with institutionalization. (Wilson, McCann, Li, Aggarwal, Gilley, and Evans, 2007)

In the adult day services setting, Alzheimer's disease patients have access to activities which have been shown to benefit these individuals. Such activities include:

- music therapy, which can improve social and emotional skills, decrease behavioral symptoms and aid recall (Ziv, Granot, Hai, Dassa & Haimov, 2007)
- reminiscence, which can promote interpersonal connections (Kasl-Godley & Gatz, 2000); and
- walking and other forms of physical exercise, which can improve cognition, mood, sleep and functional ability (Eggermont, van Heuvelen, van Keeken, Hollander & Scherder, 2006; Williams & Tappen, 2007).

Adapted from the *Guideline for Alzheimer's Disease Management, California Version, Final Report April 2008*, pages 22-23