

## Tips for Convincing the Person with Dementia to Attend a Day Program

**Convince yourself first.** Take a tour of more than one center and discuss any objections you anticipate the person with dementia might have. The staff of the centers should be experienced at enticing reluctant people to attend and at managing newcomers' anxieties. Find out how they do this.

**Give a convincing reason.** Some people attend because they see the center as their "club" or "class" or "job." Some go for a particular activity or to be with other people. Some attend to help others, as a volunteer would.

**Enlist the help of an "expert".** Sometimes it helps to have the person's physician or clergy or family friend talk with them about the merits of attending.

**Look for a hook.** Arrange for the person to visit the center when there is an activity scheduled that they might enjoy or even try out on the spot. Perhaps there is a day when more men or more women are attending and if that would influence their attending, stop by then.

**Take one step at a time.** The purpose of the first, short visit is simply to have the person agree to go for a day. Don't push too hard. The "just-try-it-and-see" approach works better.

**Be firm.** At first the person may enjoy going but then later complain of being unhappy. Don't argue. The next day they are scheduled to attend, try saying, "They are expecting you today" or "I just want you to go for a little while" or "Let's talk about that later."

**Get the right person to take him or her.** At least for the first few times, choose someone who can usually get the person to do things.

**Start with a few, short days.** Two visits a week is minimum for someone with memory loss. Short days are less taxing for newcomers. When the routine becomes comfortable, you can add hours and days. It usually takes a new person several weeks to adjust, so be patient with the process.

**Reinforce the positive.** Support any positive experience that your family member has or that you or someone on staff notices.

**Try again later.** Sometimes a person frets so much that it becomes counterproductive for them to keep attending. Trying to reintroduce the center's activities again after a few months break often proves successful.

One of the primary reasons that caregivers use adult day services is to have a break from caregiving. By using an adult day program, caregivers are able to have time to rest, relax and tend to other areas of their life. Having regular breaks is important to do in order to stay as relaxed and refreshed as possible in providing care. Also, studies have shown that caregivers who take regular breaks from caregiving are able to provide care at home for a longer period of time.