



## When Is Your Loved One Ready for a Dedicated Memory Care Community?

- **When might a loved one need to live in memory care versus staying at home or assisted-living?**  
*Safety* becomes a primary issue including:  
Safe and secure surroundings are needed if wandering (elopement) has occurred or might occur.  
Their days and nights are reversed leading to unsafe conditions in or outside the home.  
The individual believes oneself to be at a certain place or point in time that is not happening.  
They cannot identify where they live, address, phone # or how to come and go safely from a location.  
Confusion as to time and place, continually asks, “Where am I supposed to be?” or “Am I supposed to be doing something?” Constant repeating. Not remembering daily events such as eating.  
Increasing agitation and possibly aggressive behaviors resulting from confusion or frustration.  
Could harm themselves or someone else due to frustration, paranoia, hallucinations or confusion.  
Self-isolation with little to no social engagement or interaction with others.  
24 hour care and care by more than one person is needed.
- **Why should I choose memory care over traditional assisted-living if my loved one is not an elopement risk?**  
*Care Services and Programming* are essential components of memory care. Dedicated memory care communities not only offer safety and security, but also a complete wellness and cognitive based **on-site** program to encourage health and optimal functioning. The community should have a comprehensive medical approach **on-site** so that the individual does not have to go off-site for diagnostic, therapeutic or medical treatment. That means an **on-site** physician, nurse practitioner, psychiatric nurse, and therapy services in addition to the community’s wellness director, nurses, caregivers, and activities team. Look for an experienced staff that understands *redirection* and offers activities to prevent agitation or frustration. Ask about the experience level of team members. The wellness and cognitive programs are essential to quality of life for the individual. Ask about programs for families to participate in and especially ask for **on-site** educational and support programs for family members. Dementia affects the entire family. At the Opal at North Naples, we provide family events and educational programs every month. Families are always invited to participate!
- **If my loved one has a diagnosis of dementia, do they need to live in a memory care?**  
*Deciding* to choose memory care should be made in consultation with professionals and in accordance with the needs of the individual and their family. Remember SAFETY is primary. QUALITY of LIFE is essential. **Smaller is better.** A calm environment is important. The world of a dementia individual becomes smaller and routine and familiarity is critical, but so is plenty of secure outdoor space to promote independence, fresh air, participation with nature, and a feeling of freedom. Often families feel they should try to keep an individual at home until they can no longer do so. If remaining at home without wellness and activity programs or secure natural outdoor space translates into self-isolation for the individual and their spouse with a TV as the source of engagement rather than interaction with

peers and access to cognitive enrichment, then further decline can occur. Often times family members can fear having a loved one join a community because they have not visited or understand a wellness and cognition model. Communication and education are essential. Families are invited to tour the Opal at North Naples to learn more.

- **What is parallel programming and why is it beneficial?**

*Parallel programming* means comprehensive approaches with choice involved to enhance cognitive functioning. Dementia is NOT a “one size fits all” disease. It is an individual disease. “One size fits all” programming is not effective. Knowing the individual and recognizing that offering a variety of programs indoors and outdoors is essential. Programs should enhance the quality of life, nurture the spirit, enhance well-being, and bring a feeling of accomplishment and contentment. Multiple types of programs should be offered utilizing the various capabilities of the brain while providing opportunity to feel empowered. Entertainment, art, music, and physical activity should all be included in care plans. Qualified and trained staff are critical to the program component of memory care. Look for those who work together, communicate with one another and consider themselves an extension of your family. Working together to have the best possible quality of life for your loved one is paramount. The Joyful Moments program at the Opal at North Naples is designed to provide an enriching and purposeful life.

- **Can a resident remain in memory care if they are eligible for hospice services?**

*Progressive* in nature, there are several stages of Dementia. When seeking a memory care community ask if they are prepared to have your loved one with them through all phases of disease. Ask about the programs offered and their interface with services provided by hospice. Dementia in later stages brings with it the eligibility of many services provided and paid for through Medicare under the umbrella of hospice services. Here at the Opal at North Naples, we are able to care for your loved one through all stages of the disease and work together with hospice as a team in providing the very best care for your loved one.

- **Why does memory care traditionally cost more than assisted-living?**

*Personal Care needs* are higher in memory care. In addition to assisting with all activities of daily living, the wellness programs, activities and on-site capabilities are essential. Dementia is a disease that is progressive and is as individualized as each person who has it. The brain controls everything, and Dementia is a disease of the brain. Programs are as important as a secure environment. Memory care is NOT just a floor or section of a building. It is the wellness and cognitive programs and the care team that go hand in hand with the physical setting, and the supportive programming available to families. Much if not all residential memory care expenses may be tax deductible. We encourage you to consult your accountant to discuss this. At the Opal at North Naples, we help direct you to eldercare attorneys, Veterans services, and financial services providers with expertise in paying for memory care.

***For questions and further information, please contact Gay Hollowell, Director of Community Relations at The Opal at North Naples.***



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