

Duke Dementia Family Support Program

Caregiver Connections

An Educational Webinar Series With The Experts

**The presentation will begin shortly.
Thank you for your patience!**

dukefamilysupport.org

919-660-7510

Making the Difficult Decisions in Dementia Care: Part 1

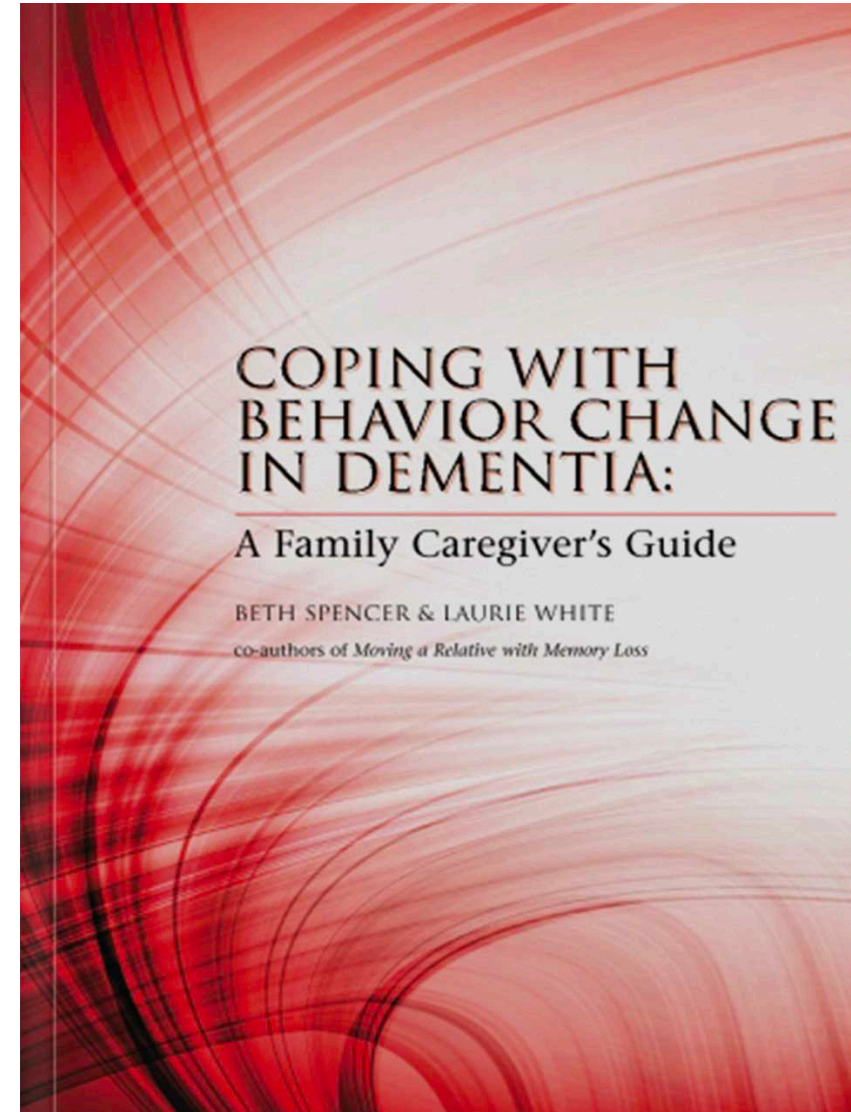
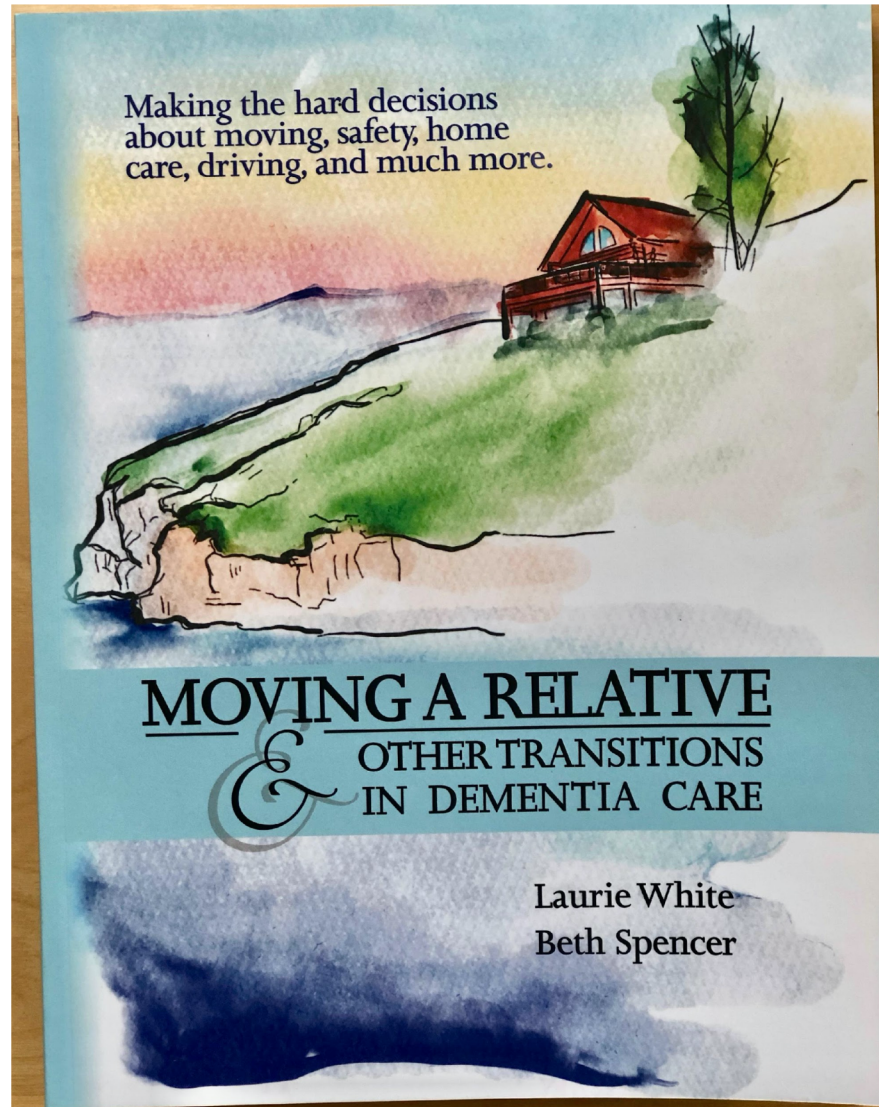
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Duke Dementia Family Support Program

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Dementiacarebooks.com



Every person with dementia is different.



Emotional & psychological experiences of individuals with dementia

- Many factors contribute
 - Prior personality
 - Type of dementia
 - Environment / lifestyle
 - Social support
 - How communication is handled

Emotional & psychological issues for family members

- Uncertainty in the face of unknown timetable & progression of symptoms
- Old relationship issues
 - With the person
 - With other family members
- Control issues

Emotional & psychological issues for family members

- Difficult value/belief conflicts
 - Within self
 - Among family members
- Grief, anger, fear, anxiety
- Growth, pride, love, caring
- Risk tolerance

Thinking about risks

- Risk tolerance: How much risk is comfortable for you?
Example: driving
- Probability: How likely is it that something bad will occur with this risk?
- Severity of risk: How serious will it be if something bad happens?
- Risk of alternative options: Example: home versus nursing home

Making the tough decisions

- Gradual shift from joint to care partner
 - Continuing to involve person as much as possible
- Try to plan ahead
- Use “baby steps” if you can – that is, a little at a time
 - Example: medications
- Whenever possible include your relative in the decisions
- Think about how to give as much control as possible

Where trouble usually starts

Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs)

- Driving
- Managing money
- Paying bills
- Handling medications

Cognition (thinking abilities) & IADLs

- With progressive dementias, different cognitive areas may become impaired which can affect ability to do IADLs, such as:
 - Judgment & decision making – example: paying too much
 - Visuospatial abilities – example: reaching for a glass
 - Abstract thinking (meaning of signs & symbols) – example: time
 - Self assessment & insight: Insight vs. Denial

Insight

- Insight: Awareness of one's illness & awareness of how it is affecting oneself
 - Self insight varies from person to person throughout life
 - Part of brain that provides insight may be damaged (not denial)
 - May be awareness of illness but not of how it is affecting self

Denial

- Denial: Refusal to face reality as a means of coping
 - Not always a bad thing
 - Can pose difficult challenges for families
 - Confronting with truth often fails
 - May be memory loss, not denial

Giving up the keys: Strategies

- Help the person with the emotional impact
 - Begin conversation early – involve the person
 - Have caregivers drive with the person
 - Talk about change and age
 - Help plan alternative transportation

Giving up the keys: Strategies

- Secretary of State Form (MI) - REQUEST FOR DRIVER EVALUATION
 - http://www.michigan.gov/documents/OC-88_16727_7.PDF
- Driver Evaluations
- Using authority figures (e.g., doctors, attorneys, financial planners)
- *At the Crossroads* booklet may be helpful.
 - https://s0.hfdstatic.com/sites/the_hartford/files/at-the-crossroads-2012.pdf
 - Or google At the Crossroads Hartford

Medications

- Monitor ability to take safely
 - Use systems or medication dispensers
 - Ask doctor about eliminating / simplifying meds
-
- Baby steps!!
 - If refusing meds, think about why
 - Try to give more control

Financial issues: Dangers

- Poor judgment – inappropriate spending
 - Gambling, giving \$ away, being exploited, buying things that can't afford
- Computers, door-to-door, mail, phone
- Financial abuse
 - By relatives
 - By strangers

Financial issues: Strategies

- DPOA (Durable Power of Attorney)
- Legal planning - trusts
- Representative Payeeship (Social Security)
- Automatic bill payment
- Guardian / Conservator – last resort

Financial issues: Strategies

- Mail – PO box; mail sent to someone else; fundraising donations discussion
- Bank accounts – Have several at different banks
- Credit cards – Prepaid limits; switch to debit card
- Phone – Do not call lists; turn off ringer, block international calls, change phone #
- Computers – Change email address; ramp up security; filters

Agenda, Part 2: June 22nd at 1:00 pm

- Activities of daily living (ADLs)
- Safety alone
- Moving decisions
- Health care & end of life decisions

Questions

Resources

- Dementiacarebooks.com

- *At the Crossroads* Hartford Foundation

https://s0.hfdstatic.com/sites/the_hartford/files/at-the-crossroads-2012.pdf

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Thank you for joining us today!

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