

Personal stories about putting a relative with Alzheimer's or other dementia in a nursing home

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These stories are based on information gathered from health professionals and consumers. They may be helpful as you make important health decisions.

Louise, age 66: I had always told myself that I would never put my husband George in a nursing home, and I kept him at home as long as I possibly could. But he started getting aggressive, throwing things and threatening me and other people who came to visit. His doctor gave us some medication, but it didn't seem to help much. In the end, it just seemed too dangerous to keep George at home. I was afraid he would hurt himself or maybe hurt me, even though I know he didn't know what he was doing.

Elizabeth, age 51: My husband and I thought about putting my mom in a nursing home, but we've decided to keep her here with us for now. We visited several different facilities, but we couldn't find one nearby that we felt comfortable with. If my mom were in a nursing home, I would probably spend so much more time worrying about her that it just wouldn't be worth it. Fortunately, we can afford to hire some part-time help so that we have time for work and other activities. I'm not sure we could keep doing this without that help.

Jeff, age 49: My dad was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease several years ago. For most of the time since then, he's been living with my wife and me and our kids. Taking care of him is a lot of work, and we don't have any other family nearby who can help out. And with our jobs and the kids and other responsibilities, we just can't give him the level of attention he needs. I think he'll get better care in a nursing home than we can give him here.

Marianna, age 65: As long as Howard doesn't get violent, I plan to keep him at home with me. Some days it's really hard, and I think to myself, "Am I really making a difference here? Would he even realize it if he were living somewhere else?" He's still my husband, though, and I know he would do the same thing for me if the shoe were on the other foot. I just wouldn't feel right letting other people take care of him.

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