

# LONG TERM CARE COMMUNITY COALITION

*Advancing Quality, Dignity & Justice*

## EFFECTIVE DEMENTIA CARE NAVIGATION

### FACT SHEET FOR INDIVIDUALS LIVING AT HOME OR IN ASSISTED LIVING

Caring for someone with dementia can be overwhelming. As the condition progresses, families often face challenges in finding the right care, coordinating services, and navigating a complex healthcare system. Dementia care navigation offers guidance and support, helping individuals with dementia and their families access appropriate services, communicate effectively with healthcare providers, and ensure that care is tailored to the individual's unique needs.

This fact sheet describes how dementia care navigation works and how it can help create a more connected, responsive, and person-centered care experience. For more information and resources, please visit <https://nursinghome411.org/dementia-care-in-the-community>.

### What is Dementia Care Navigation?

Dementia care navigation provides individuals and their families with expert guidance in managing the complexities of dementia care, helping them navigate healthcare systems, coordinate services, and access resources. This support can help ensure timely care, reduce delays, and improve the quality of life for both individuals with dementia and their caregivers. By enhancing communication and reducing confusion, care navigation bridges gaps in fragmented healthcare systems, offering a structured pathway to connect families with needed services. Ultimately, the potential benefits of dementia care navigation are to reduce stress and ensure that individuals with dementia receive personalized, holistic care across all stages of their journey.

### What is a Dementia Care Navigator?

A dementia care navigator is a trained professional who assists individuals with dementia and their families in navigating the complexities of the healthcare system. They act as a guide, helping to coordinate services, connect families with community resources, and ensure access to timely care. Navigators work closely with healthcare providers to create personalized care plans and assist in making informed decisions, reducing the stress and uncertainty that families often face. By providing ongoing support, they can help ensure that individuals with dementia receive the best possible care at every stage.

### Benefits of Effective Dementia Care Navigation

Care navigators can serve as a trusted point of contact to:

- Coordinate communication among healthcare providers
- Assist with care planning and decision-making
- Provide education about dementia and disease management
- Support caregivers in their roles
- Connect families with local resources, services, and support networks

**Dementia care navigation can help individuals with dementia achieve:**

- Improved quality of life
- Fewer emergency room visits
- Better management of daily living needs
- Personalized, compassionate care

**Dementia care navigation can help family caregivers by:**

- Reducing caregiver stress
- Arranging access to ongoing support
- Assisting with navigating health systems
- Providing guidance in decision-making and planning

**Resources to Get Started**

- Alzheimer's Association's *Dementia Care Navigation Guiding Principles*.  
<https://www.alz.org/professionals/health-systems-medical-professionals/dementia-care-guiding-principles#Guidelines>
- U. of New Brunswick (Canada) *Implementing a patient navigation program for people with dementia*. <https://www.unb.ca/cric/assets/documents/implementation-resource-toolkit.pdf>

**Important Components of Dementia Care Navigation**

*(From the Alzheimer's Association's Guiding Principles)*

1. Be person- and family-centered to ensure collaboration and enhance engagement.
2. Be culturally responsive and address disparities in access to health care and support services.
3. Include well-defined roles and responsibilities for all members of the dementia care navigation team.
4. Address barriers relating to medical, legal, financial, emotional, and other domains facing the person living with dementia and their care partners.
5. Provide coaching, education, and coordination in a manner that is empowering, solution-focused, and strengths-based.
6. Focus on the family unit as defined by the person living with dementia.
7. Ensure that processes and protocols are evidence-based.