

# Dealing with Care-giving concerns

Debbie Beech

Manager – Elphin Lodge

BA Social Work

Psych Hons

010 534 6595

[Dbeech@randaid.co.za](mailto:Dbeech@randaid.co.za)



# Who are the people giving care?

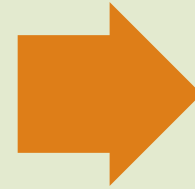
- Approximately two-thirds of dementia caregivers are women.
- About 1 in 3 caregivers (30%) is 65 or older.
- About one-quarter are "sandwich generation" caregivers. This means that they care for both an aging parent and at least one child under 18. (CDC.gov)



# Challenges in Daily Living Skills

## Challenges with personal hygiene

- Infrequent bathing
- Refusing to bath / shower
- Wearing dirty clothes
- Wearing the same clothes



## Difficulty dressing

- Buttons / zips become difficult to manage



# Challenges in Daily Living Skills

- **No longer managing meal preparation**
  - Living on tea and toast / soup
  - Skipping meals
  - Relying on ready-to-eat processed meals
  - Forgetting to prepare ready meals
  - Forgetting to eat / Overeating



# Challenges in Daily Living Skills

- **Problems with medication compliance**
  - Forgetting to take medication
  - Incorrect dosages



## Challenges in Daily Living Skills

- **Inability to manage household chores**
  - Dirty dishes and laundry piling up
  - Untidy
  - Dusty furniture
  - House smells musty / urine



## Safety Concerns

Unsafe driving

- Lots of dents / dings
- Unexplained mishaps

Fire hazards

Difficulty navigating the home

- Stairs / narrow passageways / shower steps



## Safety Concerns

Frequent falls / trips

- Loose rugs / mats
- 1:4 elderly adult falls annually. One fall

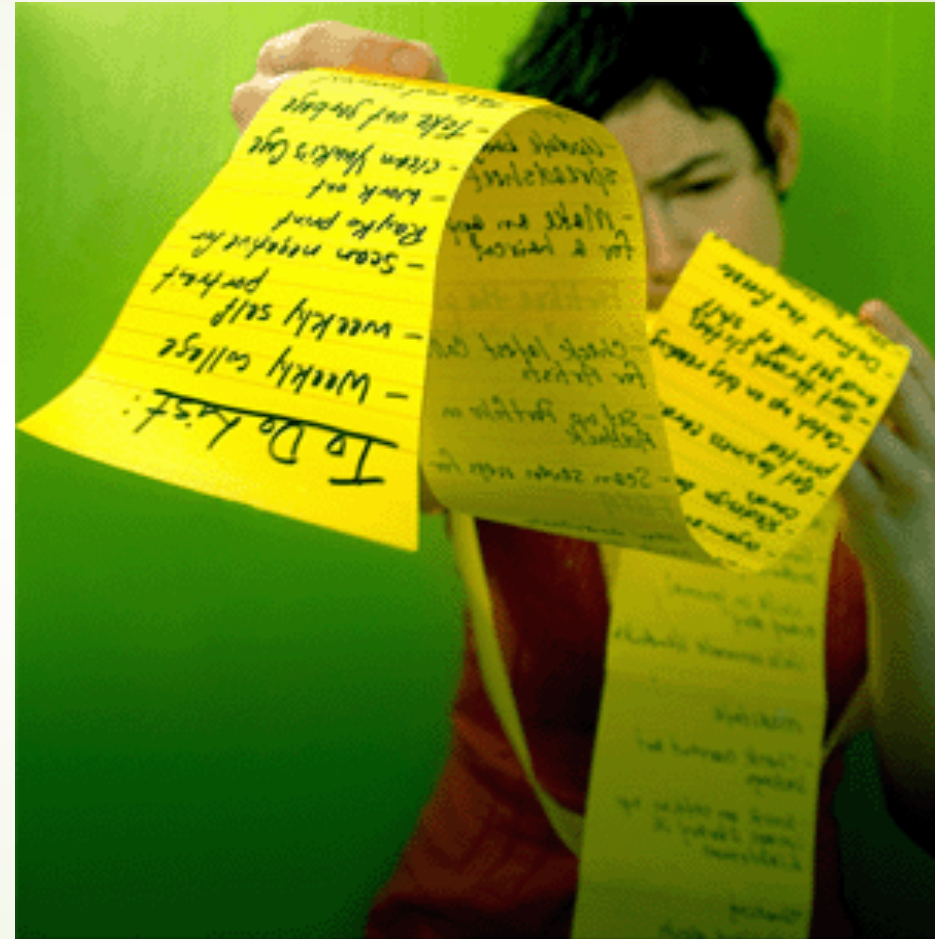
Wandering / getting lost

- In familiar places



# The Caregivers Role

- Never-ending to do list
- End up running all aspects of their life
  - Household
  - Medical
  - Memory





# Carer Burnout



Long term commitment



Life revolves around the PLWD



Constant demands



Putting your own needs last



Feeling isolated / overwhelmed

# Placement vs Home Care

- Can be very divisive amongst families
- Spouse vs kids
- Everyone has their own opinion
- When is the right time?
- Look at the facility through the lens of what is best for my loved one

Bruce Willis has been placed in a nursing home: amid criticism, his wife breaks her silence



# Placement vs Home care - Considerations

Home care	Placement
Carers – private / agency -Supervision? - Leave / UIF etc - Relief carer	24Hr nursing care
One-on-One care	Not one-on-one
Costs: Carers / Food / Household expenses / Consumables / Incidentals	Costs: Monthly board and lodging Consumables / Incidentals
Social isolation	Social engagement

# Placement vs Home care - Considerations

Home care	Placement
Spouse remains primary carer Carers = Secondary carers	Facility becomes primary carer. The spouse can be the spouse again.
Carers in your personal space	Can close the door to your room and have privacy
Family busy with own lives and looking after the PLWD	Family: Easier to spend quality time together.
Emotional toll: Burnout / Illness / Mental health issues.	Emotional Toll: Initial guilt. Mixed emotions / Relief.

# Navigating the move and transition

- Make the decision.
- Navigate the move
- Keep the reason simple.
- Don't over explain
- Don't LIE
- Expect some regression
- Visit often
- Decorate the room

## The weight of being a caregiver

Thousands of families face the same thing every day, without cameras, without headlines. And many times also without understanding. In that sense, Emma's decision is not only personal, it is a reminder that loving is also knowing when to ask for help, and that taking care of someone does not always mean being by their side 24 hours a day.

## Resilience and love

As much as it hurts to see our legend in news like this one, this story goes beyond fame. Diseases like this type of dementia destroy everyone equally, and it is very dignified to know when to ask for help and actually ask for it, knowing that criticism would come from those who lack empathy.

• The legendary Bruce Willis is facing a very difficult path after being diagnosed in 2023 with frontotemporal dementia (FTD). His wife, Emma Heming Willis, has spoken to the media and publicly confessed that she has made the hardest decision of her life: she had to move the actor out of the family home to receive specialized care in a medical center.

This measure has generated a lot of criticism on social media, but it is very easy to talk from the outside when one is not living that situation at home. Emma defends that she did it with her heart and thinking it was the best decision to take care of Bruce's well-being and that of their young daughters. And continuing as before was not fair for anyone.



## Navigating the move and transition

- Ask facility staff for guidance and advice
- Attend a support group
- Use your support system
- Be Kind to yourself

Moore added that the "most important" thing for her is "showing up in being present," because "if you project where it's going, it only creates anxiety."

"If you replay where it was and what you've lost, it only creates anxiety and grief," she said. "So when you stay present, there is so much — and there's still so much of him there. And it may not always be verbal, but it is beautiful, given the givens."



# HONORING FAMILY CAREGIVERS

**75%** of  
Caregivers  
are Female

**30%** Care  
For Two  
Generations

**38 Million**  
Americans  
Care for  
Loved  
Ones

The Average  
Duration of  
Care is  
**4 Years**

**60%** Also  
Have Jobs





**QUESTIONS?**

