

THE LAKESIDER

Spring 2007

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Hoarding and Hiding: *How to Handle These Typical Behaviors*

It's not uncommon for some of our residents to take more than one cookie from the refreshment cart, and carefully wrap each in a napkin. The cookies go into a sleeve or pocket, to be hidden later among their clothes in a dresser drawer.

The person with dementia is demonstrating a pair of behaviors known as *hoarding and hiding*. In most cases the behavior is relatively harmless, but if unchecked, could create a cluttered living space and cause health and safety issues.

According to Tamara Hartl, Ph.D., Stanford School of Medicine, hoarding is a behavior that's commonly seen, but rarely discussed, in persons with dementia. She refers to a 1998 research study that found more than 22% of nursing home patients with dementia demonstrated hoarding behavior.

Whether hoarders and hiders with dementia live in residential settings or at home, their behavior can have adverse effects and increase the burden of their caregivers. "People are

going to become very frustrated if they love someone with Alzheimer's who hoards," says Dr. Hartl.

Why Do They Do It?

It's not known why people with dementia hoard and hide, but continuously losing parts of their lives (ex., the ability to earn an income or maintain a meaningful role in their families) may trigger the need. Other possible explanations include:



- People with Alzheimer's may hoard or hide things because it makes them feel secure. They may believe if they don't conceal items, they won't have them when they need them.
- Hiding things could be initiated by fear of being robbed. People with

dementia often forget where they've put things, and then may blame others for stealing them.

- The simplest explanation for these behaviors may be that people affected by dementia have decreasing brain function. If they see something they like or want, they just act on their impulses.

A number of Lakeside Park residents collect or hoard newspapers, napkins, and cutlery. Some bring food from the dining room to their rooms in case they get hungry later. Caregivers at home may experience these same behaviors, and may also find it disruptive when their loved ones rearrange household items, or hide the possessions of other family members.

Caregivers need to be sensitive to the feelings of the person with dementia, but also realize that at some point it may become necessary to step in, clean up, and throw out – despite protests. We must also accept the fact that hoarding and hiding behaviors will most

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likely continue unabated, and should be monitored on a regular basis.

How to Cope

Creative strategies can go a long way towards lessening the impact of hoarding and hiding on other residents in community settings and at home with family members. For example, minimizing the number of available hiding places by locking unused closets or doors can help alleviate the problem.

Providing a “safe” place where the person with Alzheimer’s can store (and you can retrieve) items is also a good idea. Perhaps a drawer or box would do.

Make sure you have spare sets of keys and eyeglasses. And don’t leave important documents or cash lying

around. Most important, be aware of favorite hiding places, and check them regularly.

Safety Precautions

Rather than confronting and correcting, it’s essential that caregivers choose their battles, and if at all possible, try to adapt to hoarding and hiding behaviors. However, as caregivers it’s also our responsibility to decide when these behaviors become a threat to the health and well-being of the person with dementia and others.

- Focus on fire prevention. Check especially for papers stored on top of or inside a stove or microwave, or near a heating unit.
- Focus on fall prevention. Make certain that pathways are clear and free of clutter and debris.
- Focus on food. Spoilage can create health and safety hazards.

Meaningful Activities

Things to Do While Visiting Your Loved One

Activities are an important part of caregiving for people with Alzheimer’s or other dementias.

Simply reminiscing about everyday life can be fun. Some good conversation starters include “trips in the family car,” “life during the depression,” and “at the baseball game.” Sharing items related to the current season or an upcoming holiday can also serve to spark a dialogue.

Crafting presents a range of activities that can help bring you and your loved one together. Pay close attention to the types of projects that provide enjoyment – and those that cause frustration.

People with Alzheimer’s and other dementias need to feel a sense of accomplishment and self-worth – and reminiscing about their past often gives them that. You can combine reminiscing and crafting in a number of creative ways. Here are suggestions of activities to do together:

- Work together on your parent’s memoir or autobiography, and illustrate it with drawings and/or photographs.
- Make a scrapbook or poster incorporating old family photos and other memorabilia that celebrates your loved one’s lifetime.

- Create a collage of your family member’s favorite foods, movie stars, songs, and more, using images cut from newspapers and magazines.

Our Activity Director, Rahel Yohannes, can provide art supplies. Simply let her know what you need, and she’ll try to accommodate your wishes.

THE LAKESIDER

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Catherine & David Lyon – A Love Story

Valentine's Day has figured large in the lives of Catherine and David Lyon since they were engaged to be married on February 14, 1967. This year, they were feted with a special dinner hosted by Lakeside Park. Three other couples in which one spouse is a resident joined the celebration.

David has been a regular and frequent visitor since Catherine moved into Lakeside Park early in 2006. He's as proud of her as can be, and relishes describing their life together, and his wife's professional career.

"We've had a wonderful life, and will celebrate our 40th Wedding Anniversary in July," says David. "We enjoyed attending social events – Catherine turned every head in the room."

Catherine grew up in New York City. She attended Brooklyn College, and captained the debate team for two years. She attended the University of Chicago Law School, and went directly to UC Berkeley to earn a Ph.D. in Education Planning.



Catherine and David Lyon celebrate Valentine's Day at a dinner hosted by Lakeside Park for residents and their spouses.

It was at UC Berkeley that Catherine met David, who was studying for a Ph.D. in City and Regional Planning. While they pursued their studies, they also hiked in the Sierras and visited Stinson Beach and Inverness. And they enjoyed cooking French cuisine, using Julia Child's classic "Mastering the Art of French Cooking."

After earning their Doctorates, the Lyons' lived and worked in a number of cities across the country. Catherine's first job was Education Planner for the Philadelphia School District. The couple also worked in the New York City area while Catherine was the Deputy Superintendent of Schools in New Rochelle, and later the Assistant to the Deputy Chancellor of the New York City School District. Over the years, Catherine also held executive positions in the private sector – for the Rand Corporation, International Paper Company, and the Ford Foundation.

At Lakeside Park, Catherine is still very much the "professional" woman. She enjoys "business talk" and relishes giving caregivers and fellow residents "assignments."

Although she no longer has the concentration to read, Catherine still enjoys leafing through newspapers. She also gets a great deal of pleasure



from paging through her library of biographies and art history books.

Before moving into Lakeside Park last year, a 24-hour caregiver lived with Catherine and David in their San Francisco home. "It became more and more obvious the two of us could no longer give Catherine the kind of attention she deserved and needed," says David. "I visited a number of dementia communities – but I could tell Lakeside Park offered the best fit for Catherine's personality and needs."

"I'm very appreciative of the home-like environment, and can tell that Catherine is, too," he continues. "The staff is so thoughtful and proactive in making sure she gets just the right amount of attention and care – and exactly what she needs at this stage of her disease."



Sharing Information and Resources

The response to our offer in the last issue of *The Lakesider* for the free booklet, **Moving a Relative with Memory Loss – A Family Caregiver's Guide**, was overwhelming. It made us realize that a list of readily available books could be helpful in coping with issues faced by those caring for someone with dementia.

You'll find many helpful and educational books, including some of the titles below, in the Executive Director's library. They're available for our families to borrow – so come check them out!

If there are other resources you've found helpful – please let us know! We'll be sure to pass along your recommendations in future issues.

For Families and Friends

The most comprehensive book – and deserving of our highest recommendation:

The 36-Hour Day

– Nancy Mace and Peter Rabins, M.D.

Additional titles:

Alzheimer's Disease: The Family Journey

– Wayne Caron, James Pattee, Orlo Otteson

Alzheimer's Early Stages: First Steps for Families, Friends and Caregivers

– Daniel Kuhn and David Bennett, M.D.

Alzheimer's: Answers to Hard Questions for Families

– Nelson and Nelson

Surviving Alzheimer's: A Guide for Families

– Florian Raymond

The Complete Guide to Alzheimer's-Proofing Your Home

– Mark L. Warner

Especially for Kids

What's Wrong with Grandma? A Family's Experience with Alzheimer's

– Margaret Shawver

What's Happening to Grandpa?

– Maria Shriver

Coping When a Grandparent Has Alzheimer's Disease

– Beth Wilkinson and Ruth Rosen



Copies of **Moving a Relative with Memory Loss** are still available. If you're trying to decide if it's the "right time" for your loved one to move into a care community, call Janet Thompson, our Director of Community Relations at Lakeside Park, 510-444-4684, to receive a FREE copy.

You can also call to make an appointment to visit Lakeside Park, or just stop by when you're in the neighborhood. Someone is available to show you around – *seven days a week.*



A "Bouquet" for Lakeside Park

The staff at Lakeside Park welcomes the opportunity to assist our residents. Often, though, it's their families and friends – relieved of the stress of care – who experience our help most profoundly.

We think of their "thank you" notes and cards as "bouquets," and wanted to share this particularly meaningful one with you.

We save our "bouquets" in a scrapbook in our lobby. In it, you'll read of many relationships that have

improved and flourished with the burden of round-the-clock care eliminated.

Whether your loved one is already a member of our Lakeside Park family, or you're faced with the decision about whether it's time for a residential care community, we want you to

know that we consider it an honor and privilege to care for our residents, and by extension, their families.

January 23, 2007

To: Janet Thompson

From: LaVerne McLeod

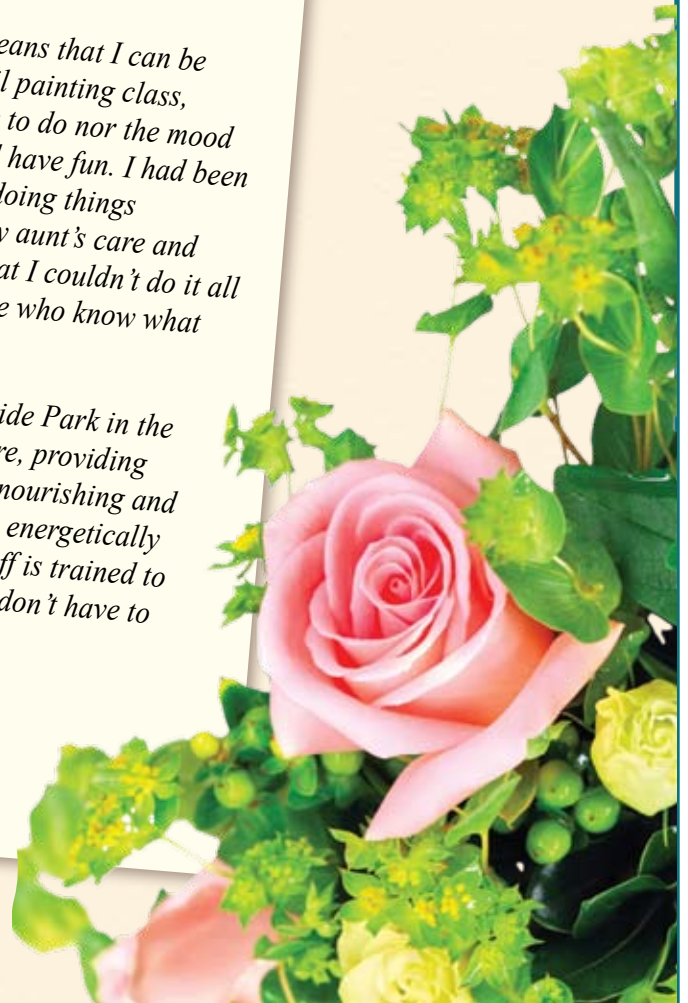
I never knew how good I could feel until I really started experiencing life again about two months after I moved my aunt to Lakeside Park. I can sleep all night long without waking and obsessing about my list of things to do for her. My conversations with my husband and other family members don't always include care giving and protection matters.

The cliché, "I got a life," really and truly means that I can be happy. I gave myself a retreat and took an oil painting class, something I thought I never had the patience to do nor the mood to enjoy, and what I realized was that I could have fun. I had been so consumed and used up and had excluded doing things for myself except fixating on worries about my aunt's care and her protection. It was hard to acknowledge that I couldn't do it all and it is so much easier when I allowed people who know what they are doing handle my aunt 24-hours a day.

I feel so blessed that my aunt is living at Lakeside Park in the hands of responsible and loving staff giving care, providing stimulating activities that interest my aunt and nourishing and good food that my aunt loves. I don't have to be energetically drained and consumed as the Lakeside Park staff is trained to deal with dementia and Alzheimer's residents. I don't have to deprive myself of happiness.

With gratitude,

LaVerne McLeod





Ask Bonnie

Bonnie Bollwinkel is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and consultant with the Alzheimer's Association of Northern California. Bonnie facilitates Lakeside Park's monthly family support group.

Q My dad's behavior late in the afternoon is so disruptive. How can I help soothe him?

A Your dad may be experiencing "sundowning" - a set of behaviors including restlessness, agitation, increased confusion, pacing, paranoia, and feelings of insecurity and fearfulness - which can occur in persons with dementia in the late afternoon or early evening.

Some experts believe decreasing light causes sundowning. Others speculate that the fatigue of coping with the day's activities and challenges could play a role. Whatever the explanation, it's very difficult for caregivers and families to deal with an agitated and demanding loved one.

Coping Strategies

Some tactics can be effective in offsetting sundowning behaviors. For example, closing curtains and blinds, and using interior lighting may help. And since fatigue could be

the issue, try to get the person with dementia to rest before the behaviors begin. A short nap or quiet period could make a difference.

It's always a good idea to ensure that reaction to a medication, or when a medication is taken, is not triggering the difficult behavior.

Keep in mind that your loved one lives in a disorienting world. Sensitivity and flexibility can make a big difference for everyone caught up in the difficulties of sundowning.



Alzheimer's & Dementia Care

468 Perkins Street
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Honoring Life Experiences

Lakeside Park is a 68-unit assisted living community specializing in the care of seniors with Alzheimer's or other dementias.

Five to eight residents comprise a "house," that opens onto a shared living room area. The "houses" surround the floor's open activities area.

Activities are offered *every day*.

Monthly Fee includes *all* the care a resident needs.

We are available to show you our wonderful community - *seven days a week*.