ANOSOGNOSIA & PLACEMENT

Anosognosia

Anosognosia is a common symptom of dementia in which a person may be unable to recognize changes in their memory, thinking, or abilities. TAnosognosia is not simply denial or stubbornness; the neurological changes can make a person genuinely unable to recognize their own cognitive or functional impairment. Trying to convince your loved one that something is wrong may lead to frustration, arguments, and mistrust.

Practical Tips for Families Navigating Placement with Anosognosia

1. **Don't Try to Convince Them**

Avoid repeatedly pointing out memory problems or explaining why they can no longer live alone. Instead, focus on what they are gaining:

- No cooking or home maintenance
- Activities and social opportunities
- Transportation and meals
- Their own apartment with help nearby

Instead of: "You can't live alone anymore."
Try: "This will make things easier for you."

2. **Find an Explanation That Works for Them**

The reason for moving doesn't have to be "because you need help." Use an explanation that feels comfortable and makes sense to your loved one.
"We'd like you to try this for a little while."
"Your doctor would feel better knowing someone is nearby."
"I'd feel much better if you did this for me."

3. **Offer Choices—But Don't Ask When "No" Isn't an Option**

If the family has determined that living alone is no longer safe, avoid asking, "Do you want to move to assisted living?"
Instead, provide control through smaller choices:
"Which comforter would you like to bring?"
"Would you like to see your apartment before or after lunch?"

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Practical Tips for Families Navigating Placement with Anosognosia cont.

4. **Plan Ahead & Work With the Community**

Family can handle tours, finances, medications, and care needs behind the scenes. Tell staff about the anosognosia before move-in so everyone uses a consistent approach.
Even if Memory Care isn't needed now, ask what additional support is available if the dementia progresses.

5. **Make the Transition Familiar & Simple**

Set up the apartment ahead of time with favorite photos, furniture, bedding, artwork, and other familiar belongings.
Keep moving day calm. Limit the number of people involved and coordinate with staff so your loved one can transition into a meal, activity, or something enjoyable.

6. **Prepare for "I Want to Go Home"**

Avoid arguing, correcting, or repeatedly explaining why they cannot leave.
Instead of: "You live here now."
Try: "I know you miss home. Let's get some lunch and we'll talk about it."

Validate the feeling, reassure, and redirect.

7. **Prepare for some discomfort.**

This is often the hardest part.
Your loved one may be angry. They may say they're perfectly capable of living alone.
The presence of anger does not by itself establish that the decision was inappropriate.

Keep the Goal in Mind

Your loved one does not have to understand why they need assisted living in order to eventually feel safe and comfortable living there.
The goal isn't to convince them that something is wrong. It's to make the transition safe, respectful, familiar, and reassuring.

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