

Questions and Answers – Memory Care

- 1) Where would be a good place to have a client with Dementia or Alzheimer's cot area set up in a shelter setting?
 - a. If it is a shelter with one large room, try to have the clients with dementia in as quiet an area as possible away from the main entrance. Having them facing the back of the room may be less stressful than facing the entire room, which would be overwhelming to see so many people. However, keep in mind the location of the bathroom and building exits. Try to make it easy for them to find the bathrooms and avoid having them near exits to avoid possible elopement. Be cautious putting them by windows during a storm as it could be loud and frightening. If it is a school, a secure classroom would be ideal if they have staff to supervise or check in often.
- 2) Would you recommend dividers in a large room with photos or pictures for those clients to look at?
 - a. Yes, I would recommend room dividers to make the room seem smaller and less overwhelming. Allow some space between the cots and the dividers to allow them room to walk and not feel "locked up". Putting pictures on the dividers would be fine as long as the pictures are calming. Nature pictures are calming and easy to relate to- gardens, beach scenes, autumn scenes, winter scenes, etc. Be careful with animals because some may not like animal or may be afraid of them. If you do use pictures of animals, I would suggest puppies or kittens as they are "cute" and do not evoke fear. Simple posters and artwork are best. Also look for classic photos, old time movies, pictures of old time cars, phones, streets, etc. Do not use pictures of food that may trigger their requests, since the food at the shelter is so limited.
 - b. The pictures would be great conversation pieces for the caregivers and staff to reminisce with the clients with dementia.
 - c. Do not use mirrors as many with Alzheimer's and dementia do not recognize themselves and may see their reflection as a stranger.
 - d. Playing soft music or music of their generation may also be calming and something they many with dementia enjoy. If there are room dividers, it may be easier to hear the music over all the noise of the room.