

3-3 Supporting family

TIPS Question:

How would you support a family member – one of two sons, who feels his father (our client) has forgotten him? One son feels his brother may be more important because the client forgot the son visited him. One son is 70-years old and the other is 68. The father is 88-years old. Family history appears to have been okay re: relationships.

Response:

Your question illustrates why question #2 of the P.I.E.C.E.S. 6-question template is so important...you have isolated that the short term memory loss can not only be a problem for the resident, but a concern for his son.

During the P.I.E.C.E.S. education sessions you learned “all behaviour has meaning”. By understanding the changes within the brain and the 7 A’s, you can understand how short term memory works and not be offended when someone does not remember you. It is my guess that this gentleman’s son does not have this same understanding. Within P.I.E.C.E.S. You have a few tools at your disposal to use to assist you in developing care strategies that can assist this son to reframe his relationship with his father.

Refer to Partners in Care in the Resource section of the P.I.E.C.E.S. guide. Here, it is suggested that you can apply P.I.E.C.E.S. to yourself and other partners in care. You can use the P.I.E.C.E.S. acronym to gain a better understanding of this son and his ability to understand and appreciate the changes to his father’s memory. Under “S” for example, you might want to think about past important long-term memories that both the son and father continue to share and enjoy. You might also want to explore activities they can both enjoy now, recognizing that these may not be remembered by the father, but helping the son to understand his role in enhancing his father’s quality of life “in the moment”. Under “E”, are there other emotional/mental health concerns for the son at this time? With your understanding of the father-son relationship, you can use P.I.E.C.E.S. and the U-First! wheel to aid you as you assist this son to continue to have a meaningful relationship with his father.

Remember you have other Partners in Care who are able to assist you in teaching this son about dementia. The Alzheimer’s Society Public Education Coordinator, whose role is designed to provide public education about dementia, is available to assist you. The Alzheimer’s Society usually offers support group for family and caregivers. They also have many resources in the form of books and videos available for loan, and free written information that might be helpful. And you may find that there are several family members who also don’t have adequate understanding of dementia, and you may want to provide this education at your Continuing Care Centre.

Please note: TIPS information should be used similar to the way you would use information from a text book! TIPS is not intended to serve as an individual consultation service! P.I.E.C.E.S. participants should use this information in context and always work closely with the family physician involved in the care of the resident or client and with other Partners In Care to find solutions to individual resident/client issues.