

TRAVELLING WITH SOMEONE — WITH — DEMENTIA

10 tips to take the Stress out of
Family Vacations!



Cynthia (Cyn) Dunn
CLSC, CDP, CPCA

Travelling with someone with Dementia: 10 tips to take the Stress out of Family Vacations!

Traveling is a rewarding experience at any age. The trip may be to visit other family particularly, grandkids and great grandchildren or it may be just travelling to the family cottage.

Travelling with my dad who had Alzheimer's meant I had to focus on only his needs first throughout the process. Mine and the rest of the families needs followed. This book is broken down into three parts, Preplanning, the Day of Travel, Destination Respite Care. Doing my homework right away rather than later was my salvation!



PART 1: PREPARATION & PLANNING

When travelling together planning, reserving and confirming must be accomplished sooner rather than later. Preferably once the destination is determined.

TIP 1: Make sure there is no reason for your loved one not to travel

Request copies of prescriptions and/or statements of medical conditions from physician

TIP 2: Gather all necessary identification and documentation

First, gather all identification necessary for travel such as passports and ID. Put them together with your tickets and itineraries so all your documentation is in one place. Along with a prescriptions list and other medical information your loved one may require.

International travel which includes the US requires a passport ensure your loved one has one, my dad didn't so this to was adding to my to do list.

Make two copies of all documentation for you to travel with and have one set left with someone at home, or with a neighbour.

TIP 3: Find out where medical facilities are located at your destination

If you are traveling to a location you are not familiar with, do some research to find out where Health Care Facilities are in the event of an emergency.

TIP 4: Arrange for any special dietary needs

Find out what food restrictions exist ahead of time so you can make sure there will be appropriate food available at all your planned destinations. In some cases, special food or supplements may have to be taken along on the trip.

TIP 5: Bus and Cruise - if you have additional help with your loved one at home

Many people choose to cruise or do bus tours, these can be fantastic ways of having a wonderful holiday. For me I realized that I needed the same support on these trips as I did when at home. Be aware that this type of care is not supplied you must take someone with you.

TIP 6: Request and Reserve Special Services with Travel Agents, Hotels and Airlines

If you don't make and confirm these requests at the time of reservation, the airline, cruise line, train or bus line has no obligation to make them available on check-in or while enroute. Find out as much as possible up front about what special services would be available to you while navigating this part of your journey. Also, contact your accommodation for any special needs.

Request seat assignment in the rows designated for disabled travelers and close to washrooms. And, importantly, request cost-free wheelchair service at every airport stop connection and arrival location. If there is meal service aboard, advise the reservation system of any dietary needs.

TIP 7: What to do if you get separated, I'll tell, my worst fear was that so this is what I did

Yes, it may have been overkill but so be it. I did all three

- a) Get a prepaid mobile phone. Program your number into the phone.
- b) ID bracelets are cheap, so I got two engraved. They had my dad's name, my cell number on them and one had the hotel name and the other the cruise ship name
- c) I picked up a GPS tracker. It was Safelink it allows you to track (WHO? OR WHAT?) on your mobile phone.

TIP 8: Be Practical When Packing; Pack as lightly as possible

Packing seems straight forward, unless the special someone you are packing for is returning each item to it's rightful place as fast as you are putting them in the suitcase. Has that ever happened to you? Again, this is one of the many challenges I had to overcome. I finally decided to pack in the dead of night well maybe not but when my dad was engaged in another activity and hide the suitcase when I'd finished. Whew who knew it would be a covert operation.....?

Take the time and if needed spend the money on a good couple of swivels wheeled pieces of luggage and proper in cabin luggage.

- ✓ Pack medications in your purse/or carry aboard bag making sure you have enough for the trip plus 3 days
- ✓ Have duplicates of items easily lost like sunglasses, hats
- ✓ Wear easily removed and replaced shoes/runner

TIP 9: Think about Safety and Security

There are thieves everywhere and, particularly, in high-traffic travel centers. Don't give the scalawags any opportunity to steal. We used money belts, which kept things close and/or on the body.

While going through the different security checks it helped me to make sure I was giving a running commentary on what was happening to my father, why it was happening and what was going to happen next.

TIP 10: Think Comfort

- ✓ Purchase a c-shaped travel pillow if you don't have one, it supports the neck and head when resting aboard your transportation
- ✓ Ear phones for watching TV, listening to music or watching movies on your iPad
- ✓ Eye shades for sleeping
- ✓ Shawl type item to be used as a blanket

PART 2: DAY OF TRAVEL

By the day you are travelling all your pre-planning will bring you to a place of comfort and you will be tending to only meals, dressing, and transportation to your airport or cruise ship. The key here is not to rush, you've arranged how to get from home to the airport or cruise ship terminal.

1. Arrange for a taxi or town car to take you to the airport or cruise ship terminal.
2. Plan to get to the airport a minimum of two to three hours early.
3. Give yourself plenty of time to get checked in,
4. Have a snack before your flight and use the restrooms prior to boarding.

The latter will decrease the likelihood that a restroom will be needed on the plane right away. You are now at one of the busiest places in your town or city and you have a plan...

Travel is very tiring for someone with Alzheimer's as I found out from my dad. So please add down time into your daily schedule. Work at keeping to the same structure you have at home I know that worked well when I could do it for my dad. It wasn't perfect, that's ok.

Plan for Security Checkpoints

When going through security, have your loved one to wear shoes that can easily be taken off and put back on.

PART 3: DESTINATION

RESPITE CARE

I'd like to suggest for anyone traveling to find respite care in the town or city you are visiting, this is something that worked wonderfully for our vacations with my dad. To know he would be well cared for and to give us an opportunity to indulge in an attraction that he was unable to participate was a mind-settling thought.

If you happen to be travelling to my city, beautiful Vancouver BC Canada. Let me provide you with Respite Care while you are here. That way for the times your loved one with Alzheimer's or a related Dementia cannot attend an outing that you or you and your family are doing you will know they are in the hands of an Alzheimer's specialist. We do minimum 4 hours shifts right up to 24 hrs of continuous care if needed.

For me travelling with my family is tremendously important and to be able to travel with minimal problems is fantastic, it will never be perfect. However, the most important feeling is travelling in peace and with no guilt. That only comes from understanding your loved ones needs and planning accordingly. I hope some of my suggestions will help you to have that next awesome vacation!



With over two decades of helping people realize their best and coaching teams to succeed in their endeavors, Cyn's diverse education and experience has allowed her to meet a variety of needs for a broad client base.

Cyn's latest and most challenging role stems from her more recent life experience. The loss of her first husband to cancer, a horrific car accident which left her son with a severe brain injury and the loss of both her Dad, who had Alzheimer's and her Mom to ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease) – both within 30 days, left Cyn permanently transformed. Since then she has turned her attention to the support of and promoting the awareness of the special needs of Caregivers.

Cyn spent the first part of her career helping people make better choices and decisions about their lives. Today, fueled by her transformative personal experiences, she now focuses on the wellbeing of Caregivers as CEO of Choice Dementia Services. Her mission is to help the Caregiver who struggles with bringing mind and body to harmony and balance, live the fullest life they can, one moment at a time.

Re-Connect Re-Charge Re-Energize

Cynthia (Cyn) Dunn CLSC, CDP, CPCA

Founder | CEO

Direct line: 778.231.3130

www.choicedementia.ca

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