



November 24 - 30, 2017

## TIPS FOR ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE OR DEMENTIA CAREGIVERS

Dr. Elana Shpall, MD

In commemoration of National Alzheimer's Awareness Month and National Caregivers Month, On Lok Lifeways recognizes the caregivers who take on the important role of caring for a loved one suffering from Alzheimer's disease or dementia.

When faced with the responsibility of caring for a loved one, many caregivers may find themselves in a new and unfamiliar role. However, by taking necessary steps, caregivers can help the person living with Alzheimer's or dementia maintain a sense of independence and at the same time reduce stress levels. When caring for a loved one, consider the following:

- Be patient and supportive. Offering comfort and reassurance



can encourage the person to explain his or her thoughts.

- Maintain eye contact. It shows you care about what he or she is saying.

- Use touch, sights, sounds, smells and tastes as a form of communication with the person.

- Avoid criticizing, correcting, or arguing. Instead, listen and try to find the meaning in what

is being said. If the person says something you don't agree with, let it be.

- Sometimes the emotions being expressed are more important than what is being said. Look for the feelings behind words or sounds.

Dr. Elana Shpall, MD is a bilingual geriatric medicine doctor at On Lok Lifeways in San Francisco.

On Lok Lifeways (part of the On Lok family of senior services) is a comprehensive health plan that provides long-term care for eligible seniors living in San Jose, San Francisco and other parts of the Bay Area. The program offers full medical care and support services with the goal of helping seniors live at home and in the community for as long as possible.