

Memory care and the services provided are specialized to meet the needs of individuals with Alzheimer's and/or dementia related disorders (ADRD). Memory care is often signified by:

- Safe and supportive environment
- Higher staff-to-resident ratio
- Sensory-based events/activities - As reported by the CDC, stimulating environments can aid in the management of the disease.
- Environmental accommodations that reduce anxiety, facilitate easy navigation and reduce incidence of falls.
- Deliberate unit/room design and décor to support a home environment conducive to activities
- Specially designed recreation therapy activities – To prevent physical and mental atrophy.
- Flexible meal times -ADRD residents can be hungry at somewhat different hours, so nutrition is a challenge

The Center for Disease Control reports that treatment for ADRD focuses on managing behavioral symptoms. In traditional nursing home settings, behaviors tend to be managed by costly anti-psychotic medications; however, memory care shies away from this approach. In a memory care unit, staff are encouraged to learn about resident history and to utilize behavioral approaches to curb the effects of the disease. In memory care facilities, anti-psychotic medications are typically used as a last resort to ensure resident safety.

While there is currently no cure for ADRD, specialized memory care can manage the symptoms of the disease and lead to an improved quality of life for individuals and their caregivers. For example, the Alaska Pioneer Home implements person-centered memory care. This approach, drawn from the Eden Alternative, views the elder as an integral member of the care team and includes the resident and the family in care planning. This enables staff to incorporate resident personal preferences and lifestyle choices into treatment.

Memory care and the Eden Alternative offers a holistic approach to ADRD treatment. Recognizing the uniqueness of the individual and, as a result, the uniqueness of their disease, enables specialized treatment and care that promotes quality of life even into the late stages of the disease.