



Feelings of guilt, anger and loss are common, as we try to come to terms the fact that someone who may have cared for us in our younger years, or shared our adult years with, is no longer able to cope on their own.

We never know how we are going to deal with a close family member going into a care home until we find ourselves in that situation. Very often it can be an isolating experience, wondering if we've 'done the right thing'.

"I don't think I can deal with the guilt of putting my father into a Care Home"

First of all, we must look at the concept of a Care Home to understand where the feelings of guilt are coming from. If you had rented an apartment in Spain for your loved one, equipped with living assistants and great facilities, it is unlikely you would feel guilty. Care Homes on the other hand, are often seen as places where people 'put' their elders when they are no longer able to support themselves, and we feel that we have failed our loved ones by considering this option. However, a Care Home can be the right choice for a number of reasons.

Making the Right Choice for you and your Family...

Many elderly people choose to go into a Care Home, as it provides social opportunities which they may long since have lost. It also provides them with round-the-clock when needed, regular cooked meals, and, importantly a way to enjoy families on their own terms. Many elderly people do not want the 'guilt' of feeling that they are a burden on their families, or may even feel that living in a growing family again may be too stressful.

As someone who may have had to make that decision for them on account of medical grounds (eg., dementia), you may be feeling that you should have found an alternative which allowed your family member to stay within the family. However, when home care becomes difficult, either through families working full-time or when a loved one's needs become too great for home care, it is wise to reconsider the benefits of a Care Home.

Arranging for a family member to go into care can often be the best way of ensuring that families can continue to enjoy each other and maintain a positive relationship. With the stress,

resentment or sacrifices (and guilt for that resentment - we are very good at tying ourselves in knots!), visits can be a happy occasion for everyone. You can rest easy that your elderly family member is being well cared in an environment which meets their needs. What you can do is to ensure that your loved one is happy where they are, by being involved in their Care Plan from the very beginning.

Talk openly and honestly about Options

Every situation is unique - there is no absolute moral angle here, only the duty as a family member to do what is best for your loved ones and all those who may be impacted by the decision. It is far more important to maintain a close relationship with elderly family members than to do what is considered 'the right thing' by others' standards, and risk losing that relationship as a consequence. If the decision is down to your family member, ensure that you have spoken openly about their reasons for wanting/not wanting to go into Care. Taking time to listen and agree now - particularly something as difficult and sensitive as this - may save much heartache in later years.