

The Eden Story

Imagine moving to a home in a new town where you don't speak the language, you don't know what is considered normal or what is expected of you.

The new place is not like home at all! You know you can't return to your previous home and must adjust to the new surroundings. There is little to do, so your room becomes your world with only a small window to view outside.

You miss digging in the garden. Playing with your dog. Walking in your neighbourhood. You are bored and lonely and miss having control over your life. Your family and friends visit sometimes, but they live a long way away from you. Each day is the same and you begin to lose hope for your future. Then someone starts talking about something different, something called Eden.

The Eden model of care recognizes that life for many people living in a continuing care facility may look and feel like living in a strange town. The Eden Alternative™ philosophy is that life does not end when a person moves into a care facility. Life can be friendly and fun in a warm atmosphere with respect for people who have choices – just like home.

How does Eden happen?

As caregivers in an Eden facility, all staff are involved in making life in a continuing care facility a positive one. The people who live in the facility are honoured for their wisdom and are given the respectful name of Elders. The Elders participate in the communal life of the facility – their home. They are encouraged to give as well as to receive, and to take part in activities.

The Eden Alternative™ philosophy brings decision-making to the Elders. This cultural change is a journey that eases the three plagues of continuing care - loneliness, hopelessness, and boredom. Companion animals, indoor plants, gardens and children are included in the life of the facility.

Eden is a powerful tool which replaces the emphasis on physical care with a holistic, *quality of life* philosophy of care. The Elders maintain an enhanced sense of purpose and overall well-being.