

The Client

Shirley is “spicy,” as her care coordinator gently puts it. When we first met her, Shirley was also “verbally expressive.” “Feisty.” And above all: “challenging.”

It wasn’t just Shirley herself: it was her situation. At Tender Rose, we know dementia is as unique as the people living with it. There’s a spectrum to the disease, but while some situations are more difficult than others, the complexity of Shirley’s was off the charts medically, legally, and emotionally.

The Challenge

Shirley was receiving care from a traditional home care agency, but they were struggling. They couldn’t get her briefs changed, convince her to take her medication, or win her trust. Shirley was also living with her daughter—a hoarder who was dealing with mental health issues. Shirley hadn’t showered in years, her windows were boarded up, and she existed on a steady diet of hot dogs. The court had to step in, assigning a fiduciary/ conservator and calling Adult Protective Services to remove Shirley’s daughter from the home. The situation was dire. Shirley’s doctor—who has worked with many Tender Rose clients—knew it was time to give us a call.

Working with Shirley did not get off to a smooth start. Our team was collaborating with the other agency, working with Shirley’s doctors, and dealing with tense family dynamics. Shirley’s “spiciness” was front and center, manifesting in refusal of care, throwing things, and name calling.



The Solution

Shirley’s fiduciary worked with us to get her care under control. The team removed the boards from the windows, cleaned out the house, and implemented a nutritious eating program that did not include hot dogs. We transitioned Shirley to a consistent sleep schedule—which was a challenge after living in a dark, boarded-up house for years. We worked with the courts and fiduciary to remove the other agency from Shirley’s case and we started to oversee visits from her daughter.

Even more important to Shirley’s quality of life is her relationship with her primary Memory Care Professional (MCP), Marisol. Marisol works with Shirley five days a week. She handles logistics and personal care. She makes sure Shirley’s daughter doesn’t overstay her visits and exhaust her mother.



But she also reads Shirley the newspaper every day, plays music by her beloved Elvis Presley, and watches ball games with her. Three months into this new era of care, Shirley was stable for the first time in years.

The Outcome

Today, Shirley's house is clean and homey, with Christmas lights hung year-round and curtains open to the sun. The family is beginning to heal from their rift, knowing they don't need to debate their mother's care. Shirley is taking her medications consistently and is eating and sleeping well.

She's still "spicy." But she no longer uses her feistiness to push people away; she uses it to connect with her team of MCPs and offer them sage advice. Our MCPs are happy to get it—because it makes Shirley so happy to give it.

Contact us for a free consultation today. We'll explain our one-on-one approach to dementia care, and how we can reconnect you with the person you love.

Call 415-340-3990 or visit www.tenderrose.com

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