

# Tips for talking to your family member about the Wellness & Arts Center

Adult day health services are an excellent care option for older adults who would benefit from enriching activities and lively conversation with peers, and the close attention of compassionate health professionals. Helping your loved one to understand

these benefits, however, can be difficult, especially if memory loss or other cognitive challenges make changes in routine difficult to process. Know that at Iona, our team is with you every step of your journey to ensure your loved one feels welcome and safe in our Center.

## Here's how you can get started:

**1. Talk to your physician.** With an emphasis on activities that stimulate mind, body, and soul, our program helps older adults remain as healthy as possible for as long as possible. And, for many participants, knowing that our program is a good choice for their physical and cognitive health is reason enough to attend. Ask your doctor to back you up. Some physicians have even written out a "prescription" for our program.

**2. Frame our program as a "club."** Many of our participants attend the Wellness & Arts Center because they see our program as a club or class. Emphasize an activity you know your loved one enjoys (for example, gardening or music) to encourage them to visit our "club" for a few hours.

**3. Emphasize getting involved in the community.** Does your loved one take great joy in helping others, as a volunteer would? Many of our participants enjoy coming to the Wellness & Arts Center because they can support others.

## Need another hook?

For more conversation starters, and to learn more about how adult day health services can help you and your family, please contact us by calling (202) 895-9448 and ask for our Helpline or email [info@iona.org](mailto:info@iona.org).

# Transitioning to the Wellness & Arts Center

## Tips for your visit and first days in our program:

**1. Talk to our team before your visit.** You and your family member will get the most out of your visit day if we can anticipate obstacles. Let us know if you have any concerns so we can problem-solve before the visit.

**2. Look for a hook.** Schedule your family member's visit when there is an activity you think they will enjoy.

**3. Take one step at a time.** Your goal for the first visit is to simply encourage your loved one to return for another day. Don't push too hard; use a "try it and see" approach. Initially, they may express reluctance. This is not unusual, as trying something new can feel uncomfortable. Our team is standing by to ease any anxieties, walk them through the transition, and connect them with friendly participants who might share similar interests.

**Here are some things you can say before your first day:**

- "Let's just give this a try."
- "Oh, they are expecting you today, and have already ordered lunch for you."
- "I'd like you to go for a little while."
- "Let's talk about this later."

**4. Get the right person to bring your family member to our Center.** Choose someone who your family member trusts and will listen to.

**5. Start with two half-days per week.** Short days are less taxing for newcomers. When the routine becomes comfortable, you can lengthen the days and/or add more days. It usually takes a person a few weeks to adjust.

**6. Reinforce the positive.** Remind your family member of any positive experiences they have had in our Center. Our staff will also share with you successful moments we observe.

**7. Try again later.** Sometimes (rarely) a person frets so much that it becomes counterproductive. Some families find that trying again after a few months' break is more successful. Let us know what obstacles your family member might be expressing. Our care team is very creative in problem-solving and overcoming a new participant's reluctance.

## Ready for a tour?

We're so excited to meet you! Call (202) 895-9448 and ask for our Helpline, or email [info@iona.org](mailto:info@iona.org) to speak with our team and plan your visit.