

# The Volunteer as a Facilitator in the Transition into Long-Term Care

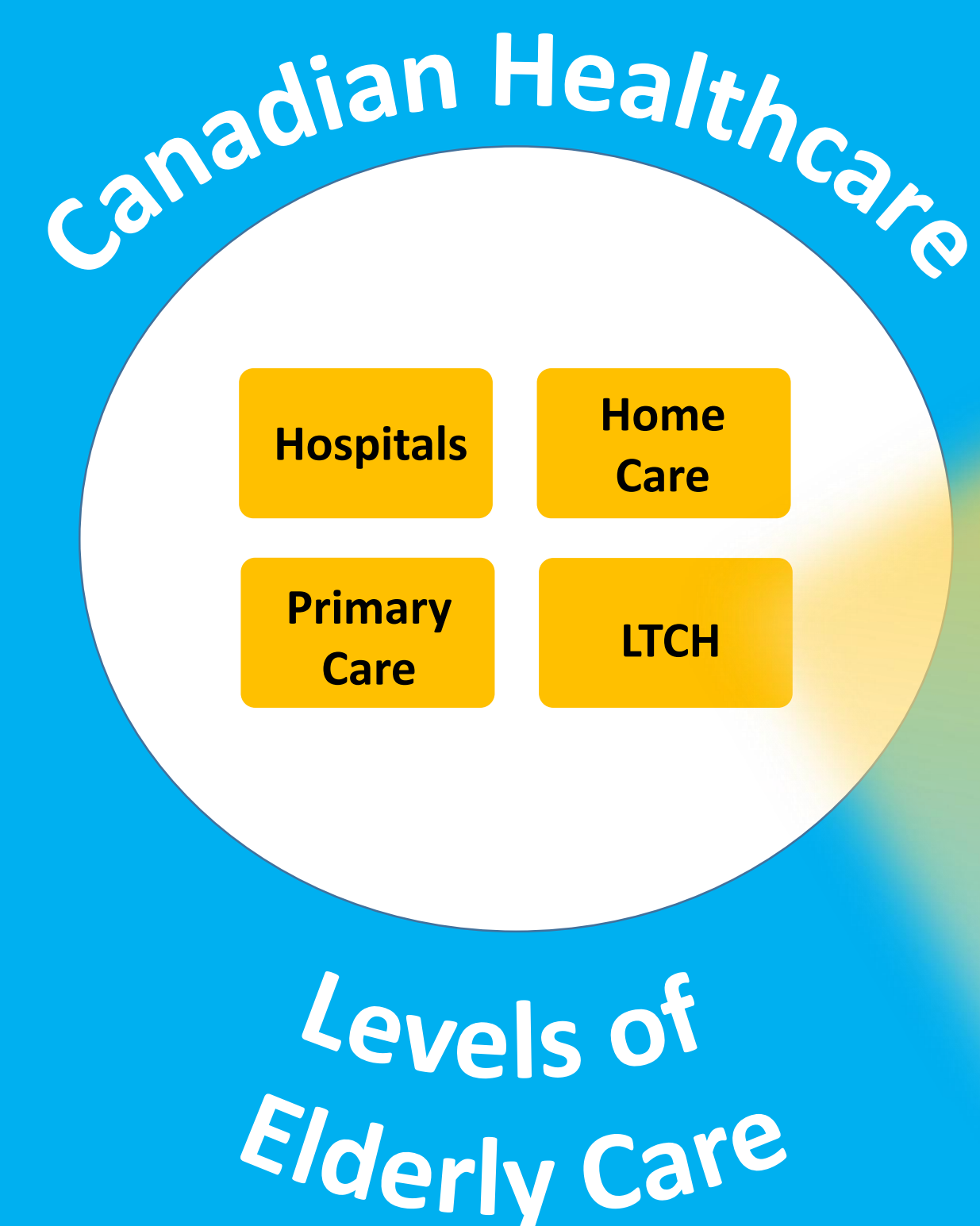
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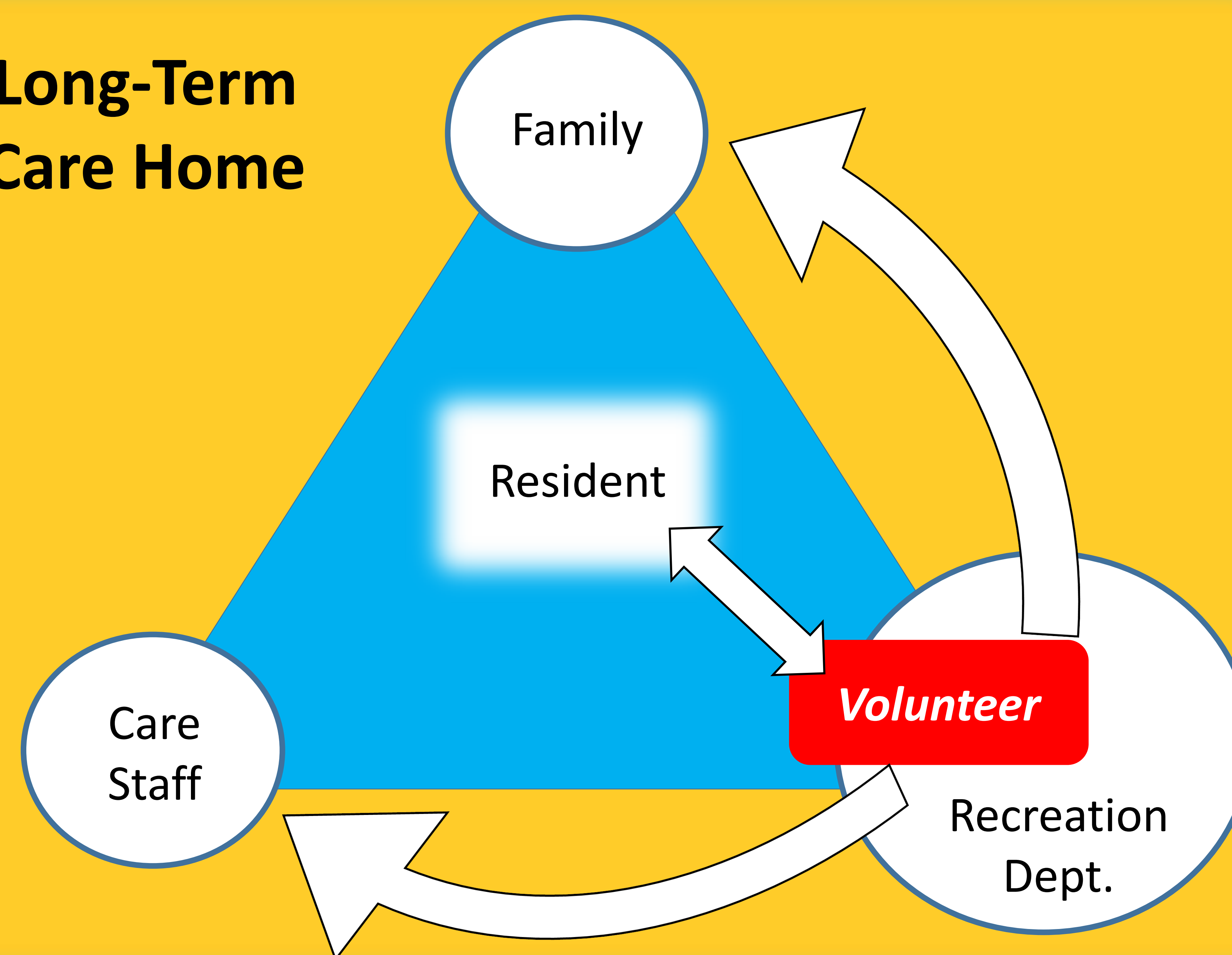
## OVERVIEW

Transitions are difficult for all, but older adults having to make the transition into long-term care face specific medical and psychosocial barriers that prevent their full integration into an unfamiliar environment. While clinicians must address the former, there are too few partners in the continuum of care of older adults who are in a position to fulfill their social needs.

How best to bridge this gap?



## Long-Term Care Home



### What a Volunteer brings to a LTCH:

- One important **link** between the resident, family and care staff
- **Continuity of care & proactive care**
- **Psychosocial stimulation** and encouragement for residents (e.g. minimizing depression, isolation, loneliness and social anxiety, while promoting self-worth and recreational engagement)
- **Compassion, patience, 1-on-1 attention**, and a “vibrant atmosphere” of youth (*Nagel et al., 1988*)
- **Distribution of workload** amongst LTCH staff (*Morgan et al., 2002*)

### What a LTCH provides for Volunteers:

- Opportunity for **work experience** & to **develop transferable skills** (*Guerra et al. 2012*)
- Fulfillment of expectations & **counselling fears** (*Guerra et al., 2012*)
- **Matching** a volunteer's preferences with their motivations (*Duncan, 1995*)
- Opportunities for **debriefing** (*Van der Ploeg et al., 2014*)

## CONCLUSIONS

Ultimately, a resident in long-term care simply appreciates a companion who will spend some time in their company as they reflect back on their life – a crucial element of maintaining a sense of self during an emotionally difficult transition.

**The presence of a supportive, attentive and empathetic individual will help overcome these Transitional Barriers.**

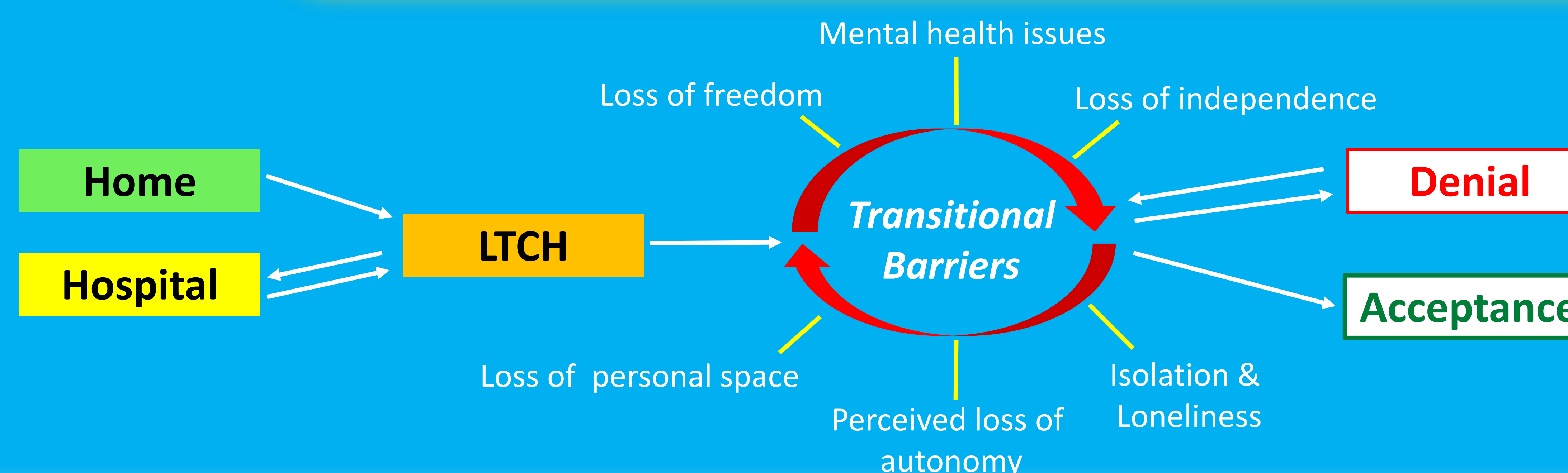
As such, the volunteer can become a companion during this difficult period, a facilitator of emotional discussion, a rehabilitator of quality of life, and a catalyst towards embracing and accepting the transition into a LTCH.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## TRANSITIONAL BARRIERS to LONG-TERM CARE



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