

Aging Parents & Elder Care

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Conversation with Your Elder

- Select a time when you will not be interrupted and when everyone is relaxed
- Consider giving your elder a list of questions in advance
- Listen and wait for openings
- Involve other family members so they can contribute and understand
- Share your emotions about the changing situation and encourage others to do the same



Conversation with Your Elder

- Ask open-ended questions
- Actively listen to your elder's concerns
 - Respect your loved one's feelings. If they clearly want to avoid a subject, try a different approach later
- Take notes
- Do not feel pressured to discuss everything at once
- Do not be judgmental. Accept your elder's wishes for their own future.
- Have Patience!



Stages of Care Giving



Stage 1 – I May Help A Relative Soon

- **Start a journal**; chronicle your feelings, your concerns, and your actions
 - **Chronicle Your**
 - Feelings
 - Concerns
 - Actions
- **Key word – “ASK”**
 - “Ask” care recipients
 - If you know someone going through this now talk to them
 - Can you talk to there care recipient



Stage 1 – I May Help A Relative Soon

- **Key word – “ASK” (cont)**
 - “Ask” health care professionals
 - Investigate community health care options
 - Determine the availability of current health care providers
 - “Ask” lawyers
 - Consult with a good lawyer familiar with disability or elder care issues
 - “Ask” financial planners
 - Determine financial situation



Stage 1 - I May Help A Relative Soon

- Concentrate on the reality of the situation
- Begin discussions with your care recipient about their wishes



Stage 2 – I am Beginning the Help

- **Key Word: “FIND”**
 - Find services that help
 - Find duties you are comfortable providing
 - Find ways to enjoy your hobbies and interests



Stage 2 – I am Beginning the Help

- Learn as much as you can about your care recipient's illness, disease or condition.
- Learn how to provide proper care from health care professionals or from health care videos, manuals or books
- Join a support group--online or in your community
- Take regular breaks from care giving
- Rely on help from community organizations
- Keep in mind what your care recipient's wishes are. If appropriate, ask for his or her input and ideas
- Reflect the changes in your journal



Stage 3 – I am Helping

- **Keyword: “RECEIVE”**
 - Receive help--from anyone who offers
 - Receive breaks from care giving
 - Receive support
- **Remember you are not Superman or Wonder Woman**



Stages 3 – I am Helping

- Determine your limits.
- Continue regular breaks.
- Keep up with a support system
- Continue to learn about your care recipient's illness or condition.
- Start a second journal to detail your care recipient's needs and your care giving responsibilities.
- Seek out personal counseling (Care for the Care Giver)



Stage 4 – I am Still Helping!

- **Keyword: “WELCOME”**
 - Welcome the joys of your relationship
 - Welcome forgiveness (of yourself, of your care recipient, of other family members and friends)
 - Welcome shared activities



Stage 5 – My Role is Changing

- **Keyword: “ALLOW”**
 - Allow time to mourn and grieve
 - Allow remembrances to remain
 - Allow reflections of your experiences
 - Allow for them to vent & take out frustrations
 - Allow siblings to do what they can handle



Stage 6- My Care Giving has Ended

- **Keyword: “TREASURE”**
 - Treasure your dreams
 - Treasure your opportunities to share lessons learned
 - Treasure memories of your care recipient



What is Home Care?



Home Care

- Home Care Personnel Include:
 - Registered Nurses (RN's)
 - Therapists
 - Homecare Aides
 - Companion/Homemakers



Choosing the Right In-Home Care

- Define the tasks to be done by the homecare worker
- Make sure you and your care recipient are comfortable with the idea of someone coming into your home to assist
- Ask questions about where to find homecare services



Private Homecare

- You must do substantial background checks on candidates
- You must be prepared to do all the paperwork necessary to comply with tax and insurance laws affecting employees
- You may not get candidates with the same level of training and licensure as those who work for home care agencies
- You do not have the guarantee of substitute help if your home caregiver is ill or on vacation.



Agencies provided care

Questions to Ask:

- Is the agency certified for participation in Medicare and Medicaid programs (where applicable)?
- How long has the agency been serving the community?
- Is the agency accredited by a recognized accrediting body?
- Does the agency provide an initial assessment?



Agencies provided care cont.

- Does the agency provide all of the services you need? Can they provide flexibility to meet the patient's changing health care needs?
- How does the agency choose and train their employees? Are background checks made?
- Does it protect its caregivers with written personnel policies, benefit packages and mal-practice insurance?
- Does the agency provide literature explaining its services, eligibility requirements, fees and funding?
- Does the agency have arrangements in place for emergencies? Are the agency's caregivers available 24 hours a day, seven days a week? How quickly can they start service?



Agencies provided care cont.

- Are references from former clients and doctors available?
- What types of programs does the company have in place to assure quality care is provided?
- Will the agency go to bat for you if your insurance company or Medicare fail to cover a claim you and the agency thought should be covered?



Home Care Tips

- Buy a small, lightweight pitcher
- Avoid placing a lot of mirrors around your home.
- Use large dials and number pads
- Buy your loved-one's clothing in basic colors like black, tan, white, cream and green



Safety Tips

- Have smoke detectors installed near kitchen and bedrooms
- Have safety rails in showers and tubs
- Install handrails up stairs and in bathrooms
- Use non-slip flooring in kitchens and bathrooms
- Remove any loose rugs
- Remove any dangling telephone cords



Choosing A Nursing Home



Types of Care

- Custodial
- Intermediate
- Skilled nursing



Finances

- What Can We Afford?
- What Do We Need to Know?
- About Basic and Supplemental Costs?



Choosing the Nursing Home

- What to Look for:
 - Services
 - Staff
 - Accreditation



As You Tour the Facility

- Safety
- Livability
- Nutrition



Tips from Those Who have been There

- Plan ahead
- If you can afford it, try using a nursing home for short term stays to determine how well they meet your family's needs.
- The nursing home decision is a very emotional and stressful one. Seek out counseling either during the decision-making process or immediately after.
- Make sure the facility is a good fit



The Intangible Component

- Practical considerations
- Checklist aren't necessarily the whole story.
- You may find a place that's not as beautiful or as good on paper as some of the others, but you can just tell it has heart.



Care Giver Guilt



Care Giver Guilt

- Holidays
- Guilt is destructive
- Release the guilt



Care Giver Burnout



Burnout

- Feelings of depression.
- A sense of ongoing and constant fatigue
- Decreasing interest in work
- Decrease in work production
- Withdrawal from social contacts



Burnout

- Increase in use of stimulants and alcohol.
- Increasing fear of death.
- Change in eating patterns.
- Feelings of helplessness.



Counteract Burnout

- Participate in a support network.
- Consult with professionals to explore burnout issues.
- Attend a support group to receive feedback and coping strategies.
- Vary the focus of care giving responsibilities if possible



Counteract Burnout

- Exercise daily and maintain a healthy diet.
- Establish "quiet time" for meditation; get a weekly massage
- Stay involved in hobbies.



Care Givers & The Internet

- Never self-diagnose or self-treat you or your loved-one, always seek the opinion of a professional
- Don't believe every health web site is credible - be on guard for quackery
 - If a site offers a cure for an incurable disease, it's probably not true
 - Keep a look out for advertisements in disguise as health-care sites; their information may not be objective
- Be aware of privacy policies so that your information isn't being shared with the rest of the world



Resources

- Military OneSource
1-800-342-9647
- Administration on Aging -
Eldercare Locator
1-800-677-1116
- [Alzheimer's Disease
Education and Referral
Center \(ADEAR\)](#)
1-800-438-4380
- [Medicare Hotline](#)
800-638-6833
- [National Institute on Aging
Information Center](#)
800-222-2225
- [Arthritis Foundation](#)
800-283-7800
- [National Fraud Information
Center](#)
800-876-7060
- [National Osteoporosis
Foundation](#)
800-223-9994
- [Social Security
Administration](#)
800-772-1213
- [Alzheimer's Association](#)
800-272-3900
- [National Women's Health Inf.
Center](#)
800-994-WOMAN



Questions?

