



A Caregiver's Corner Publication... tips for the at-home Caregiver

Courtesy of Douglas Rehabilitation & Care Center
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Developing a Caregiving Plan

A careful evaluation of the current situation and pre-planning for both short- and long-term options will be helpful when it is time to make a decision about long-term care. By looking ahead and discussing potential issues which may face you in the future, the decision may be less stressful because important decisions will have already been addressed.

By having a conversation long before the need for long-term care arises, you take into account your loved one's wishes, understand what support may be available from outside sources, and determine who is willing to participate in decision-making to find a solution that works well for all involved.

The American Health Care Association offers the following suggestions regarding a conversation about long-term care options:

- Talk sooner than later. Have a conversation about long-term care before the need arises.
- Prepare yourself. Do yourself a favor by doing your homework and identifying options.
- Prepare your loved one. Ask the permission of your loved one to have the discussion.
- Choose the right time and environment for holding the discussion.
- Stay positive. Understand it is normal to encounter resistance.
- Be a good listener. By listening, you can learn the wants and needs of your loved one.
- Include others in decision-making. Think of other people who will be able offer guidance or advice that will be meaningful to your loved one and invite them to participate in the discussion.

Not only will talking about the issue help ease the emotional tension, but it will allow for financial pre-planning to prepare for the level of care that is desired. By dealing with the issues ahead of time, there is less pressure on everyone when a catastrophic event forces a decision.

Before the conversation is held, it may be helpful to establish points of discussion, and ground rules. Make it clear you will stick to the topics at hand, and stay committed to finding solutions for the well-being of your love one. Consider the full range of services available, including help from family members, friends, neighbors and caregiving professionals. The goal should be getting a consensus for the best care options available.

You may find the following Discussion Planner helpful as you prepare for a meeting with your loved one and other decision-makers. You may wish to circulate a copy to all who wish to be involved for input prior to the meeting to come up with an agenda that addresses everyone's concerns.

Discussion Planner

Define the reason for the discussion:

What are the issues that need attention?

Health: _____

Social: _____

Emotional: _____

Financial: _____

Safety: _____

Hours of Need: _____

Urgency: _____

Who can help? _____

What follow-up is needed after this meeting – what, who, when?

What	By Whom	Timetable

Identify the preferred method of contact for all parties involved:

Name	Relationship	Preferred Method of Contact

Copy and circulate to all members of the discussion for appropriate follow-up.

Is a second meeting required? If so, date and time: _____