

Employee Assistance Program

Caring for Aging Relatives

Approximately 43.5 million adult family caregivers care for someone over the age of 50, while 14.9 million adult family caregivers care for someone who has dementia or Alzheimer's disease. As older relatives age, they may require more care than family members can provide. Many younger relatives are then faced with the difficult decision to find the right outside care for their loved ones.

Assess Your Loved One's Level of Care Needs

Evaluation standards used by physicians, insurance companies, in-home care agencies, government programs, and facilities are called Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) and Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs). Examples of ADLs include bathing, dressing, transferring (in and out of bed or chair) and eating. Examples of IADLs include using the telephone to dial numbers like 911, preparing meals, shopping, managing medications and managing money. Keep in mind that any range of activity requires examining. For example, if your mother needs help bathing, does she just need reminders, help getting in and out of the tub, or help actually bathing herself? If a "light" level of assistance is needed you can purchase items such as grab bars, shower seats, pill dispensers, etc. If you need further assistance, it is beneficial to contact a physician's consultant or a geriatrician.

Conduct Family Meetings

Family meetings are a good source of assistance in assessing the situation and determining what actions need to be taken. Make sure to involve everyone in the family including close friends. There may be some discrepancies within the conversation that some people do not agree upon, therefore involve a third party to help with these issues. The most important thing is to identify concerning issues that influence your aging relative's care upfront. Draw up a list of questions beforehand so you are prepared for the conversation and put all concerns on the table.

Before Making a Decision

Before making a decision of how your loved one will receive care, consider the following:

- Be sure your loved one's condition and support system have been thoroughly evaluated.
- Talk with your loved one to find out his or her wishes.
- Gather as much information about a facility before you visit.

Stay Fully Involved If Your Loved One is Placed in a Facility

- Visit frequently and encourage others to visit
- Attend quarterly care plan conferences
- Speak up to raise concerns; if any
- Get to know staff and help them get to know the resident
- Advocate for individualized care
- Document any problems you might observe

For more information on this topic or further assistance, please contact your Employee Assistance Program.

(n.d.). Retrieved from http://wpoelearning.workplaceoptions.com/SB_Caring_for_Aging_Relatives/SB_Caring_for_Aging_Relatives.htm



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