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ELDERCARE RESOURCE SERVICES



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**"HELPING YOU HELP YOUR LOVED ONES"**

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**A FREE PUBLICATION ON ELDER ISSUES**  
**TEL: 508-879-7008**

### EMERGENCY ROOM VISITS

When a Senior is brought to the hospital with an acute medical illness there is often an increase in anxiety and often times an increase in cognitive functioning.

Everyone is often rushing and moving fast. For Seniors watching this they are unsure what is going on around them and unsure of what is happening to them.

Some suggestions include trying to keep curtains closed in the ER to keep quiet and calmness in their setting. Make sure the ER staff talks with your relative so they can feel included. As an advocate ask questions and talk outside the room to physicians and nurses to provide them

with additional information. It is never easy to talk about someone with them in the room.

If a visit to the ER is after dinner or the stay longer, dim the lights in the room so it mimics night time. This helps keep the circadian rhythm of the day. Otherwise in an ER there is only bright lights and no windows making it difficult to distinguish what time of day it is.

Try to keep as much of the routine as possible.

Keep a diary of the medications given and observe for any side effects. Keep this journal close and bring it each time someone is in the ER. After several ER visits you will have critical

information to share with the staff on which medications may have a calming effect or if there is some worry or anxiousness.

If music is calming play some music from your phone in the ER to distract and provide relaxation.

For anyone who has dementia any move from their established pattern can cause an increase in memory loss. There may even be signs of memory loss after their return to their living environment. Health changes can affect cognitive loss.

### ABOUT US

**ElderCare Resource Services** is a certified aging care management company co-owned by Linda Sullivan RN, CMC, and Debbie Gitner LCSW, C-SWCM. Our unique Nurse/Social Worker team is able to provide both psychosocial and medical consultation to our clients. Linda and Debbie work together on each case. Families can consult with either of us. We are strong advocates for our clients giving them information to make them better consumers; getting their relative the best care. Together we are able to assist our clients and their families with information on Community Services, Home Care, Assisted Living, and Nursing Homes. Linda and Debbie have over 35 years working with the geriatric population. Now is the time to plan for the future. Call us if you have a question about our services. We'll be happy to chat. Look for our monthly column in the Metro West News '[Senior Questions and Answers](#)'

### FAMILY CAREGIVING

When there is more than one sibling, often times caregiving falls to one caregiver. It can be the closer sibling, the eldest, or the daughter. Feelings can surface from the caregiver that other family members are not helping. Consider sitting down with family members to discuss ways to delegate and share roles.

For some family members it can be making calls about resources, bringing in food, etc. For siblings at a distance can they pay bills, can they reorder prescriptions, can they do research on care such as Assisted Livings or medical settings in case health changes occur? Families do not always have to visit

daily. In some situations even with a family meeting family members may not be able to share or assist with caregiving.

As primary caregiver if the role becomes too time consuming then consider hiring assistance to help you with your aging relative.



Certified Members:

**Aging Life Care Association**

## RESPIRE CARE

Start planning now for the summer. As a caregiver it is okay to take some time off for a summer vacation. In order to take time off it is important to start planning.

There are options such as another family member stepping into the role, or hiring help or a respite stay at an Assisted Living.

If a family member is able to take over then start to groom them now by having them visit to see how things are done. At the same time write down what you do, when you do it, and how you do it so anyone can follow your system.

If there is no family then two options; hire a Home Care Agency to come in and fill the gap, or move your relative into an Assisted Living under the respite program.

If the decision is to hire a Home Care Agency then start making

calls to start the process. Consider bringing someone in from the Home Care Agency before you go on vacation so your relative can get to know them and you will know it is a good match.

If Assisted Living Respite is the best option then start looking at Assisted Livings, find out about their respite program, tour a second time, and bring your relative to have a meal and to meet other people.

Respite allows a Senior to move in for a short period of time. Respite can be used when a family member is away on vacation or can be used post rehab when not yet ready to move back home.

Some Assisted Livings allow a one week minimum and others have a one month minimum. The apartment comes furnished so only clothes and toiletries need to be moved in.

Your relative is able to participate in all the activities and have the opportunity

to meet other people. All meals and laundry and cleaning is done for your relative.

It is okay for you to take time off and recharge the battery.

Included in the back up plan, have someone available if your relative goes to the hospital and have a list of rehab facilities ready. This way, from a distance everything will go as if you were there.

As you begin to research best options talk with friends who have recommendations but also contact Linda and Debbie to help with this process. We can provide names of agencies and names of facilities. When looking for both an agency and Assisted Living the best outcome will be if your relative feels comfortable and does well with your vacation. Then maybe you will try to take more time off another time.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Q: My father is in an Assisted Living. He is having difficulty adjusting—any recommendations to make it easier for him?**

**A:** Talk with your father about his difficulties. Is it that he has not made a friend, is it the food, is he finding the facility too large or too small, are the activities not of his liking etc.? Listen to what he is saying for what is reasonable and what can be changed. After that, talk with the staff about your father asking them their observations of your father during the day. Sometimes family members burden their children with all negatives. Your father may have a situational depression. This occurs when there is a situation such as the move to the Assisted Living without your father being in full support and his realization that he is aging. Moving into an Assisted Living is a major life change and maybe your father

needs to talk with a professional or maybe he needs an antidepressant to help. Also consider talking with your father's physician for input.

**Q: My wife went into the hospital for an infection and then to rehab. She is barely able to walk and needs help with getting dressed and showered. How did this happen so fast? At home she was able to take care of herself and did not need help. She cannot come home because of the care she now needs.**

**A:** That is a good question that we cannot answer. We have known other people in your exact situation. After the hospitalization there is a need for help that was not required prior. Why that happens could be related to other underlying diagnoses. Make an appointment with your wife's primary

care physician to talk and ask the physician that question. The physician knew your wife when she was healthy and may be able to read the hospital records to answer your questions.

**Q: My sister is single and I am her health care agent. We have always been close and my sister is now unable to make decisions for herself. I have taken over all decision making and travel over an hour to visit her during the week. I find my sister angry with me for my decisions, telling me I am taking over. How do I reduce these feelings?**

**A:** It is never easy taking over and making decisions for someone else. Give your sister as much decision making capabilities as she can handle. She wants her voice heard and still needs to feel she is in charge.