



ELDERCARE RESOURCE SERVICES



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"HELPING YOU HELP YOUR LOVED ONES"

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A FREE PUBLICATION ON ELDER ISSUES

QUALITY OF LIFE

Everyone talks about quality of life for their relative but what does it really mean? Quality of life can be different for one's mother and one's father. There is no right answer or wrong answer. It is a personal decision based upon a person's belief system. What is most important is to understand what your relative means by quality of life. It is that definition that should help family members make decisions for their relative. It is very easy to listen to a friend's story about their aging relative but when someone is faced with these decisions themselves it is not easy. Making difficult decisions about feeding tubes, intuba-

tion, or resuscitation can be challenging and when there are many siblings with their own opinions, heated discussions can occur.

We suggest that families have discussions with their relative about the definition of quality of life. One way of opening up the discussion is to tell your relative about a co-worker or friend who had to make a decision for their relative. Maybe your relative will then say, "I would not ... or I would want ..." Before difficult decisions are made think about what your relative would want. Do what they would want. That is quality of life.

ALZHEIMER'S

.It is very difficult to provide 24 hour care for a relative with Alzheimer's disease. The caretaker is under a great deal of stress 24 hours a day. If there are other family members available to assist or give the primary caretaker a break it is very helpful. Studies have shown that the caretaker is at risk of themselves becoming ill or dying before their relative because of their own stress. Alzheimer's disease takes it toll on the entire family. There is a 24 hour Alzheimer's hotline at 800-272-3900. Here someone can obtain advice, receive support, and have questions answered. People are there to help.

ABOUT US

ElderCare Resource Services is a geriatric care management company co-owned by Linda Sullivan RN, and Debbie Gitner LCSW. Our unique Nurse/Social Worker team are able to provide both psychosocial and medical consultation to our clients. Linda and Debbie work together on each case; Linda is able to answer and explain the medical aspects and Debbie can assist with services. Clients can call either one of us as we always work as a team. We are strong advocates for our clients giving them information to make them better consumers; getting their relative the best care possible. Together we are able to assist our clients and their families with information on Home Care, Assisted Living, and or Nursing Homes. Linda and Debbie each have over 30 years working with the geriatric population. Now is the time to plan for the future. Call us today if you have a question about our services. We'll be happy to chat.

THE SLEEPING DILEMMA

As we age our bodies change and one way our bodies change is in sleep patterns. It is very common to hear seniors state they are not sleeping as well at night. They find themselves napping during the day and awake at night. Sleeping pills can

be of concern for seniors. Some can put someone at risk of a fall. If a senior took a certain sleeping pill and later in the night got up to go to the bathroom they may feel woozy. This then puts the senior at risk of a fall. Melatonin can help with

sleep with little side effects. Before your relative begins taking any medications it is important to check with their physician so it is not contraindicated with other current medications and there are as few side effects as possible.



Member of:
The National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers

"Helping you help your loved ones"

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: My mother is not remembering our conversations and accusing me trying to do things behind her back. What is going on?

A: Your mother may be presenting with short term memory loss. At the moment she understands and agrees with what was said but forgets the entire conversation. Your mother still wants to be in charge and because she has forgotten the conversation she sees you as taking over. If you are finding that she is forgetting more, talk with her primary care physician. There could be a medical reason for the memory loss or it could be the beginning of a dementia.

Q: My father wants to spend the month of February in Florida. He has been going to Florida for the past 10 years. Now he needs help with his medications and he is

moving slower. Should I let him go?

A: Unless your father is not competent and you are his legal guardian, then he is competent to make his own decisions. However, consider negotiating with your father on such things as you going down with him to set him up, arranging for help with medications, going down to bring him back up, and finding services available to your father to help him. Consider hiring a Geriatric Care Manager in Florida who can check on your father, give you reports, and be available if an emergency occurs.

Q: My father and mother are losing many of their friends. They are passing away or moving closer to their children. My par-

ents are worried and even feeling sad, is there anything that I can do for them?

A: Give your parents time to vent. This is when conversations such as quality of life and what would you want if your health fails should be discussed. Most people fear that at the time they die their wishes will not be respected. Watching friends die is very hard. Your mother and father think about their own life. Listen for signs of hopelessness or changes in their daily routine that would indicate that they are feeling depressed. Depression is very common among the elderly population. What is most important is to be there, listen, and let your parents vent so they know that when it is their time—you will be there for them, and their wishes will be respected.