

The Caregiver Toolkit



Introduction

Caregiving is hard work and an important job. It is rewarding and, at times, challenging. This Toolkit provides information and tips to consider when managing and overseeing various aspects of your caregiving role as well as some options of support services. The Toolkit discusses:

- Aspects of aging that might lead to a person needing care
- Challenging aspects of caregiving and how to manage them
- Suggestions for taking care of both the care recipient and **yourself, the caregiver**

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Chapter 1:

Managing Your New Role

Part 1 – Adjusting to Changing Care Needs

Personal Care Needs

Caregiving includes helping the care recipient adapt to their changing care needs. When experiencing age-related physical or cognitive change, older adults often need assistance with everyday activities such as using the toilet, bathing, and walking.

Although the care recipient needs help with these activities, they may not want help. Having a conversation about their wants and needs can make the care recipient feel more comfortable, in-control, independent, and willing to receive help.

Tips for Helping the Care Recipient		
Toileting ¹	Bathing ²	Walking ³
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make the toilet safe and easy to use by installing a raised toilet seat or grab bar, if needed 2. Wear clothing that is easy to fasten and unfasten (i.e. elastic waistband) 3. *Recognize the care recipient's routine toilet schedule, and try to set a regular schedule for toilet use 4. *Keep the bathroom visible by placing a picture of a toilet on the door 5. *Identify when accidents occur and plan for them. If an accident occurs every three hours, make sure the care recipient uses the bathroom before then 6. Help wipe and flush as needed 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Place a shower chair, grab bars, and a suctioned bath mat in the shower to prevent slips, trips, and falls 2. Run the water and test the temperature before the care recipient enters the shower 3. Avoid sudden movements that may result in a slip, trip, or fall 4. Check the care recipient's physical mobility so you know exactly what to assist with 5. *Speak slowly and provide reminders of what's next (i.e. "First, I am going to scrub your back") 6. *Set aside enough time for a bath, as rushing can cause anxiety 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If necessary, consult a physical therapist for specific techniques for daily movement and walking 2. Put on a gait belt, if needed 3. Assist to the standing position, then count to 10 before proceeding 4. Stand by the care recipient's weaker side and position yourself slightly behind them in case of slips or falls 5. Do not rush 6. If the care recipient grows tired, rest for a moment before continuing 7. Gently encourage and reassure the care recipient 8. To maintain independence, encourage use of assistive devices, such as a cane or walker
*Refers to care for someone with a cognitive impairment		

For more information on personal care needs, ask a healthcare provider and perform additional online research.

¹ Incontinence. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.alz.org/help-support/caregiving/daily-care/incontinence>

² Fawcett, I. (n.d.). Six Tips for Bathing an Elder. Retrieved from <http://www.eldercarelink.com/Other-Resources/Caregiving/six-tips-for-bathing-an-elder.htm>

³ Ambulation. (2018, January 23). Retrieved from <https://theultimatecaregivingexpert.com/tag/ambulation/>

Activities of Daily Living

Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) refers to self-care needs including eating, using the bathroom, and getting dressed. Although you can allow the care recipient to act as independently as possible, you may have to help them with these activities. When assistance is needed, consider the following suggestions:

Managing ADLs				
Feeding ¹	Dressing ²	Grooming ³	Transferring ⁴	Incontinence ⁵
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. *Limit distractions 2. *Do not have unnecessary objects on the table 3. *Use white plates and bowls to distinguish food from the plate 4. Check food temperature before serving 5. *Serve only one or two foods at a time 6. *Serve food in bite-size pieces 7. Do not rush 8. Eat together 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. *Put together an outfit or two for the care recipient to choose from 2. Buy clothing that is simple to get on and off (i.e. elastic waistbands, Velcro) 3. *Lay clothes out in the order they should be put on (i.e. underwear on top and pants/shirt on bottom) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. *Create a routine for combing hair, shaving, cleaning fingernails, washing the face, and using lotion 2. Use a comb or hairbrush depending on what the care recipient prefers 3. Use an electric razor for shaving 4. Have the care recipient sit in a comfortable chair 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Keep your head and neck in alignment with your spine 2. Avoid twisting your body 3. Keep the care recipient close to your body 4. Keep your feet shoulder-width apart 5. Use your leg muscles, rather than back muscles, for lifting/pulling 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Avoid serving caffeinated drinks (i.e. coffee, soda) 2. Keep the pathway to the bathroom clutter-free 3. *Provide regular bathroom breaks 4. Use underwear that is easy to get on and off
*Refers to care for someone with a cognitive impairment				

For more information about ADLs, contact a professional or conduct your own research.

¹ Food and Eating. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.alz.org/help-support/caregiving/daily-care/food-eating>

² Dressing and Grooming (for dementia). (2012). Retrieved from <https://www.caregiver.org/dressing-and-grooming-dementia>

³ Ibid.

⁴ Lifting Techniques for Home Caregivers - OrthoInfo - AAOS. (2016, December). Retrieved from <https://orthoinfo.aaos.org/en/staying-healthy/lifting-techniques-for-home-caregivers>

⁵ Urinary Incontinence in Older Adults. (2017, May 16). Retrieved from <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/urinary-incontinence-older-adults>

Non-drug therapy and alternative treatments can help you manage pain through movement, body work, supplements, and surgery. These work best when you care for yourself properly at home, and add medication as needed. You may find an increase in your pain when you start therapy but this usually gets better.

Physical therapy

Movement, flexibility, and strength are important parts of treating pain.

In a typical physical therapy visit, you can expect your therapist to use any of these methods:

- Exercise
- Stretching
- Manual therapy (moving your body for you)
- Heat or cold
- Mild electrical stimulation

Your therapist will also give you exercises and other ways to help with your pain at home.

Behavioral therapy

Behavioral therapists can help you think about your pain in new ways. They can also help you cope with depression, anxiety, and other feelings that go along with your pain.

Your therapist may also lead you in relaxation exercises, meditation, or focusing techniques to help you feel more in control.

Complementary and alternative therapies

Research suggests that non-medical treatments (or "complementary care") can be effective in managing pain.

- Massage helps relax tense muscles.
- Acupuncture uses very thin needles, pressure, heat, or electricity to stimulate natural chemicals in your body that help reduce pain.
- Chiropractors adjust your body to help align your spine and other joints.
- Biofeedback teaches you to use your mind to control how your body feels.
- Guided imagery is a relaxation technique that helps you focus your mind away from your pain.

Supplements and creams

Many non-medication supplements and creams are thought to help reduce pain.

- Glucosamine plus chondroitin supplements are used to relieve joint pain and stiffness. It may take up to 4 weeks to feel improvements. Though it varies by brand, most of these supplements are made from shellfish so check the label carefully if you have shellfish allergies.
- Capsaicin cream is made from peppers. Some brands also include numbing agents (local anesthetics). It can be rubbed into the skin as needed to help with joint or muscle pain. Test a small area of skin to check for reactions like severe redness or burning.

Always tell your physician about any dietary supplements, herbal products, or over-the-counter medications you are taking (or considering taking), because they may change the way other medications work.

Surgery

In severe cases of arthritis — when the joints are seriously damaged and causing extreme pain — surgery may be considered to replace joints. Common arthritis surgeries include:

- hip replacement
- knee replacement
- shoulder replacement

¹ Bertagnoli, A. (2015, November). Therapy and alternative treatments. Retrieved from https://m.kp.org/health/care/!ut/p/a0/FYxBDoMgEAC_0j5gsxKN1d7A-oleWrhtKJFNAQmSjv6-epyZZNDgG02iHy9UeU0UDtbWperKnUr1hStvQOkDmTjhCw2ab346Ktajzn7f2FK4VO8K5f2sudASCXVawZL17nTHiW1wqKepU_Mge1A31YEQcwOjUAM8xrbpm6PKsccc49BGef0Doxl8hQ!!

Hospitalization and Discharge

Going to the hospital with the care recipient can be overwhelming. The hospital will provide a lot of information ranging from what to bring, when visitors are allowed, and how to work the television.¹ Planning to leave the hospital and adapting to new care needs is just as challenging.

During your loved one's stay, you will learn hospital routines and build relationships with the care team. Just like these pieces of knowledge are essential to a smooth stay in the hospital, learning the discharge process is also valuable.



Discharge planning is the practice used to decide what a patient needs to successfully transition from the hospital to home or another level of care.² Understanding and planning for the discharge process is necessary for care transitions.

What to Know about Discharge ³		
Talking to the Discharge Team	Planning	Training
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Discuss the care recipient's condition and any changes in care need2. Ask about likely symptoms or problems that may occur3. Create a care plan4. Request referrals for local support services5. Request assistance from the discharge planner/social worker	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Arrange for an in-hospital assessment to determine insurance eligibility for home care services2. Set up care services, if possible or necessary3. Arrange for home modification, as needed4. Request a 24-hour phone number to call when needing to speak with a healthcare professional5. Organize transportation6. Schedule a follow-up appointment	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Make a written medication list, including specific instructions on dosage, when they should be taken, and possible side effects2. Ask a member of the care team to teach you care techniques including bed-to-chair transfers, care procedures, recognition of symptoms, and more

For more information about hospitalization and discharge, visit the Administration on Aging's website at <https://www.caregiver.org/hospital-discharge-planning-guide-families-and-caregivers> or contact a healthcare professional.

¹ Gibson Hunt, G., & Levine, C. (n.d.). A Family Caregiver's Guide to Hospital Discharge Planning. National Alliance for Caregiving.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

Disease-Specific Resources

- **Arthritis**
 - To better understand and learn how to adapt to arthritis, visit the Arthritis Foundation at <https://www.arthritis.org/> or call 1-844-571-4357
- **Cancer**
 - To better understand cancer or get help, visit the American Cancer Society at <https://www.cancer.org/> or call 1-800-227-2345
- **Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)**
 - To learn more about COPD, visit the COPD Foundation's website at <https://www.copdfoundation.org/> or call 1-866-731-2673
- **Dementia**
 - To better understand dementia – which is a group of symptoms that inhibit daily functioning, including memory loss – and learn how to get help, visit the Alzheimer's Association at <https://www.alz.org/alzheimers-dementia/what-is-dementia> or call 1-800-272-3900
- **Diabetes**
 - To better understand diabetes and learn how to adapt to the disease, visit the American Diabetes Association at <http://www.diabetes.org/> or call 1-800-342-2383
- **Heart Disease**
 - To learn more about heart disease, how to prevent it, or how to live with a heart condition, visit the American Heart Association at <http://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/consumer-healthcare/what-is-cardiovascular-disease> or call 1-800-242-8721
- **High Blood Pressure**
 - To learn more about high blood pressure, visit the American Heart Association at <http://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/high-blood-pressure> or call 1-800-242-8721
- **High Cholesterol**
 - To learn more about high cholesterol and how to treat it, visit the American Heart Association at <http://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/cholesterol> or call 1-800-242-8721
- **Pneumonia**
 - To learn more about pneumonia, visit the American Lung Association at <http://www.lung.org/lung-health-and-diseases/lung-disease-lookup/pneumonia/> or call 1-800-586-4872
- **Sensory Impairment (hearing loss; vision loss)**
 - To learn more about sensory impairments, visit <https://www.hwns.com.au/about-us/about-disability/types-of-disabilities/types-of-sensory-disabilities/> or call 1-300-538-746
- **Stroke**
 - To learn more about strokes – a condition that may cause paralysis or trouble moving – visit the National Stroke Association at <http://www.stroke.org/understand-stroke/what-stroke> or call 1-800-242-8721

Chapter 1:

Managing Your New Role

Part 2 – Challenges and Risks

Difficult Emotions

Caregiving is a rewarding and, at-times, challenging experience. It can strengthen your relationship with the care recipient while also bringing up a variety of emotions including nostalgia, gratitude, frustration, sadness, love, guilt, and anger.¹ These emotions cannot always be controlled and can leave you feeling alone and helpless.

Learning to cope with the difficult emotions is essential to preventing unexpected behaviors, medical problems, and physical and emotional exhaustion.²

No one can perfectly balance all aspects of their life, but there are techniques that may be helpful in handling these feelings:³

- Acknowledge that you are making a difference
- Be kind to yourself
- Know when you need a break
- Reflect on why you are feeling these ways
- Find healthy ways to release tense feelings
- Don't focus on what you can't control
- Recognize that you can't change the past

To prevent unexpected behavior from you or the care recipient, consider the following suggestions:⁴

- Be mindful of your attitude and feelings
- Pay attention to your body language
- Think about what you say and how you say it
- Listen carefully
- Use clear and gentle directions or explanations
- Have conversations in a quiet, peaceful environment
- Guide rather than control

Caregiving is not seamless, and trying these techniques to help you and the care recipient cope with challenges may benefit your relationship and wellbeing.

For more information about managing difficult emotions, contact a healthcare or caregiving professional or conduct your own research.

¹ Waichler, I. (2017, May 3). How do we cope with anger as a caregiver? Retrieved from <https://thecaregiverspace.org/how-do-we-cope-with-anger-as-a-caregiver/>

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ A Guide for Caregivers in Managing Challenging Behavior. (2013). NJ: Health Care Association of New Jersey.

Recognizing and Preventing Mistreatment

Caregiving is hard work. Completing physically demanding tasks while driving to appointments, managing finances, organizing care, and leaving little time for yourself may result in feelings of frustration, resentment, isolation, and stress. These feelings are normal, but if ignored could result in harm to you and your loved one.¹



It can happen subtly and escalate over time. One outburst can lead to multiple outbursts. Older adults with dementia are particularly vulnerable to abuse, especially those who are verbally or physically aggressive. Even a caregiver with the best intentions may lose their temper when overwhelmed and cause harm they later regret.²

As a caregiver, you can prevent abuse by caring for yourself, and watching for signs of abuse in the older adult you are helping. Elder abuse is acts of harm or intentional neglect of an older adult.³ This includes physical violence, emotional abuse, sexual assault, financial exploitation, or neglect of care.⁴

Elder mistreatment has lasting physical and psychological effects such as worsened health, anxiety, and loneliness.

To protect and advocate for your loved one, consider the following:⁵

- Take care of yourself by taking breaks, talking to a relative or friend, or joining a support group
- Ask family members, friends, and professionals for help
- Ask a professional about appropriate responses to difficult behavior
- Identify what aspects of caregiving that are especially stressful
- Inform your family about elder abuse
- Know the signs of abuse and where to report suspicions

If you or someone you know is suffering from mistreatment, immediately report it to the relevant services.⁶ You can make an anonymous report 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You do not need evidence of mistreatment; report any suspicions.

- To report mistreatment at home, call **Adult Protective Services:** (877) 477-3646
- To report mistreatment at a nursing home, assisted living facility, or other long-term care home, call the **Long-Term Care Ombudsman:** daytime number (800) 334-9473, after-hours hotline (800) 231-4024
- To report scams, review “Recognizing and Avoiding Scams” on the next page

¹ You Are Their Advocate. (2018). Retrieved August 8, 2019, from <http://eldermistreatment.usc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Brochure-You-are-their-Advocate.pdf>

² How at Risk for Abuse Are People with Dementia? Retrieved from <http://eldermistreatment.usc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/How-at-Risk-for-Abuse-Are-People-with-Dementia-2011.pdf>

³ You are Their Advocate. (2018).

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Elder Abuse Community Education. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://aging.lacity.org/index.php?fetch=abuse>

Recognizing and Avoiding Scams



As people age, they may become more vulnerable to financial scams. Financial scammers believe older adults have more money and may have decreased cognitive ability, experience more social isolation, or suffer more pain compared to their younger counterparts. Thus, they often pose as telemarketers or government officials to trick older adults into sending money.

Financial scams may go unreported if victims do not realize they have been tricked or do not know how to report a scam. Some may not report because of shame or fear of losing independence. Scams can be detrimental to older adults, so learning about identifying scams, protection strategies, and how to report a scam is crucial.

Financial scams vary, but the most common include lottery sweepstakes, grandparent, and romance scams:¹

- **Lottery sweepstakes scam:** mail, emails, or phone calls from a lottery asking for service and tax fees
- **Grandparent scam:** phone calls, texts, or emails from someone pretending to be a grandchild in distress
- **Romance scam:** online messages from someone expressing romantic interest, however they request financial help and are never able to meet in-person

Other scammers pose as being from the IRS, debt collection, your bank, and charities.

To protect yourself from scams:²

- Ask family and friends about a possible scam
- Hang up on solicitors
- Keep financial and medical information in a secure place and use passwords on your computer or phone
- Never wire money or purchase prepaid gift cards from a stranger
- Never fully pay in advance for services
- Never pay in advance to collect lottery winnings
- Never respond to emails from your bank or the IRS requesting personal information
- Call the number on the back of your bill or credit card before providing information

If you think you or someone you know has been a victim to a financial scam, report to:³

- Los Angeles Department of Consumer Affairs, (213) 974-1452
- Federal Trade Commission, (877) 382-4357
- Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, (855) 411-2372
- Internet Crime Complaint Center, www.ic3.gov

¹ Scams: Protecting Yourself and Loved Ones. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://aging.lacity.org/index.php?fetch=publication>

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

Chapter 2:

Enhancing Your Wellness

Physical Wellness

Taking care of yourself physically is one of the most important things you need to do as a caregiver. Healthy habits – including regular exercise, proper sleep, and nutrition – are very important for your overall physical health and emotional wellbeing.

Physical wellness can provide the following benefits:¹

- Increased energy level
- Reduced feelings of depression and stress
- Improved physical strength
- Prevention of chronic conditions and diseases



Tips to Promote Physical Wellness		
Exercise ²	Sleep ³	Nutrition ⁴
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Take short exercise breaks throughout the day. This can be 3 10-minute exercises instead of one longer 30-minute session2. Set aside specific times and days of the week for exercise or physical activity3. Exercise with a friend4. If possible, find ways to be active with the care recipient	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Wake up and go to bed at the same time each day2. Avoid caffeine and alcohol 4-6 hours before bedtime3. Use comfortable bedding and eliminate as much light as possible4. Do not use electronics before bedtime5. Use relaxation techniques, such as journaling or meditation, so you do not take your worries to bed6. Eat a light snack, such as a glass of warm milk or a banana, before bedtime	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Drink plenty of liquids, but stay away from whole milk and beverages with added sugars and salt2. Eat with others by inviting a friend to lunch, participating in a potluck, or attending a meal at a community center or place of worship3. Control your portion size by planning your meals for the week ahead of time4. Include a variety of vegetables in your diet. If needed, eat softer fruits and vegetables to protect your teeth and gums5. Read the Nutrition Facts label6. Ask your doctor about vitamins or supplements

For more information on physical wellness, consult a doctor or visit <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health>.

¹ Caregivers and Exercise - Take Time for Yourself. (2018, September 27). Retrieved from <https://go4life.nia.nih.gov/caregivers-and-exercise-take-time-for-yourself/?hilite='caregivers','and','exercise'>

² Ibid.

³ Sleep Hygiene. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://wellness.ucsd.edu/CAPS/resources/Pages/download.aspx>

⁴ Choosing Healthy Meals as You Get Older. (2015, July). Retrieved from <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/choosing-healthy-meals-you-get-older>

Mindfulness

While busy with work, caregiving duties, maintaining relationships, and more, we often forget to focus on ourselves. We stray from the present moment, obsessively thinking about what will happen in the future or what just happened in the past, continuously growing more and more anxious and depressed. Mindfulness is a way to calm the mind and reduce this anxiety.

Mindfulness is a process of bringing your attention to the present moment, so you are completely focused on what is currently happening and what you are currently doing. Mindfulness can be obtained through the practice of meditation, deep breathing, and other training. The following exercises may help you begin your journey to reduce anxiety and reach a mindful state.

Examples of Mindfulness Exercises	
Sitting Meditation ¹	Deep Breathing ²
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Take a comfortable posture, either on the floor or in a chair2. Close your eyes and bring a full, present attention to whatever you feel within and around you3. Feel the sensations of your body4. Notice sounds, feelings, thoughts, and expectations that are present. Allow these to come and go, rising and falling like waves of the ocean5. Bring your attention to the in-and-out breathing wherever you notice it6. Relax and softly rest your attention on each breath7. Your attention may be carried away by the waves of thoughts, sensations, or sounds. When you notice this, let it pass and gently return to the breath8. After you have sat for ten to twenty minutes, open your eyes and look around you before getting up9. Remember this spirit of awareness as you go through your daily activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Sit in a comfortable position or lie flat2. Place one hand on your belly just below your ribs and the other hand on your chest3. Take a deep breath through your nose, and let your belly push your hand out. Your chest should not move4. Breathe out through slightly purse lips. Feel your hand on your belly go in and out5. Repeat this breathing 3 to 10 times

For more information on mindfulness, contact a professional or search for additional resources online.

¹ Kornfield, J. (2016, April 01). A Sitting Meditation. Retrieved from <https://jackkornfield.com/sitting-meditation-2/>

² Stress Management: Breathing Exercises for Relaxation. (2018, June 28). Retrieved from <https://www.uofmhealth.org/health-library/uz2255>

Chapter 3:

Rallying Social Support

Part 1 – Building a Social Support System

Building a Social Support System

Caring for a relative or friend is an incredibly important role. Whether driving your loved one to doctor's appointments or helping them bathe, you may find yourself taking more time off from work, managing finances, and performing other chores.¹

Because caregiving is time consuming, you may spend less time chatting with friends or doing the things that you enjoy. To make caregiving a bit easier, consider building a support system of people and resources that can help you overcome any obstacle.

To build your support network, begin with these steps:²

1. **Start the conversation:** Talk about you and your loved one's values and preferences for healthcare, and also discuss financial management.
2. **Make a plan:** Form a family caregiving plan to help you respond quickly and effectively when needed. This includes figuring out who will help you perform the caregiving duties. If helpful, include a social worker in the discussion.
3. **Find support:** Have a list of contact information for organizations and professionals with experience in helping family caregivers. Also, have a list of friends and family members who you can talk to when you need emotional support or a break, and consider joining a support group.
4. **Care for yourself:** Make plans with friends and relatives when you need time away from caregiving duties. Utilize your support network by asking others for help when you need time for yourself. Reach out to a respite agency to get a break from caregiving responsibilities or allow a friend or relative to help.



For more information about building a support network, refer to AARP's Prepare to Care: A Planning Guide for Families or perform your own research.

¹ Prepare to Care: A Planning Guide for Families. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.aarp.org/caregiving/prepare-to-care-planning-guide/>

² Ibid.

Chapter 3:

Rallying Social Support

Part 2 – Maintaining Healthy Relationships

Communication

As a caregiver, you have to communicate with multiple different people including the care recipient, relatives, friends, co-workers, healthcare providers, insurance companies, and more.¹ Communication is key to caring for both your loved one and yourself. In general, try to separate your emotions from conversation and stay on subject for each person you speak with.²

Communication Tips ³		
Family	The Care Recipient	Healthcare Providers
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Be open about fears, worries, and needs 2. Remember that everyone is feeling pressure and insecurity 3. Be patient 4. Give everyone time to adjust in their own way 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You both may be time time to realize that your roles may have changed 2. Be honest, patient, and kind 3. Use 'I' messages instead of 'you' messages (i.e. "I feel angry" instead of "You make me angry") 4. If the care recipient is unable to understand or express speech, ask a healthcare provider about the best way to communicate 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Express concerns, ask questions, and get facts 2. Clarify what you hear to ensure you understand the information and instructions 3. Write down your questions before doctor's visits and phone calls 4. Keep records of all that occurs with the care recipient 5. Separate anger and frustration about the situation from your feelings about the provider. You are both on the same side 6. Be aware that the doctor may be limited in their knowledge of each patient

For more information on communication, perform additional online research.

¹ How Should I Communicate as a Caregiver?. (2015). Retrieved from <https://www.heart.org/en/health-topics/consumer-healthcare/answers-by-heart-fact-sheets/answers-by-heart-fact-sheets-lifestyle-and-risk-reduction>

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

'You' vs. 'I' Statements

When communicating with others about our feelings, we tend to use 'you' statements. 'You' statements, such as *"You never help me care for mom and you need to be more helpful,"* place blame on the person being spoken to. This accusatory approach leads people to become defensive or angry, and what would be a calm conversation turns into a big argument.¹

On the other hand, 'I' statements, such as *"I feel very stressed and could use more support,"* spark positive communication by focusing on the feelings of the speaker rather than what the other person did wrong.² 'I' statements, unlike 'you' statements, allow the speaker to clearly express their feelings or needs while opening up opportunity to improve the relationship.



'I' statements are best to use when you want to discuss:³

- Another's behavior
- How you are being treated
- Your own feelings of anger
- When someone is angry with you

To craft the most effective 'I' statements, here are some suggestions:⁴

Step 1: Use 'I' instead of 'You'

I feel overwhelmed

Step 2: Focus on the behavior, not the person

when I do not have much help caring for mom

Step 3: Say how the behavior affects you

because I do not have time to take care of myself

Step 4: Say what you need to happen

so please drive her to her weekly doctor's appointments.

For more information on using 'I' statements, conduct online research or contact a professional or social worker.

¹ When to Use "I" Statements. (2018, May 20). Retrieved July 23, 2019, from <https://compassioncoach.com/blog/when-use-i-statements>

² "I" Message. (2018, February 14). Retrieved July 23, 2019, from <https://www.goodtherapy.org/blog/psychpedia/i-message>

³ When to Use "I" Statements. (2018, May 20).

⁴ Ibid.

Empathy

Caring for someone requires understanding, compassion, and – most importantly – empathy. Empathy is the practice of putting yourself in someone else's shoes to understand what they are feeling.¹ This includes the ability to sense other people's emotions along with the ability to imagine what someone might be thinking or feeling – an important skill for caregivers to develop.²



There are two types of empathy: cognitive and affective.³ Cognitive empathy is the ability to identify another person's feelings. For example, if someone is happy after achieving a goal, you are able to understand why they are happy. Affective empathy is the ability to feel how another person is feeling. Based on the previous example, you are able to feel the same happiness that they feel about their accomplishment as if you were the one to achieve the goal.

Empathy is a skill that does not often develop easily; it requires attention and practice, just like learning any other skill.

To improve empathy, consider the following techniques:⁴

- Maintain eye-contact
- Listen
- Pay close attention to the other person's facial expressions and body language
- Be mindful of your body language
- Tell the other person that you understand how they feel

By focusing on these techniques, you can help the care recipient feel more calm and understood. However, taking on another person's feelings is not an easy task. You may experience difficulty when trying to put yourself in their shoes and process the situation. Remember to take steps to promote your own emotional wellness by talking about your feelings with your support system, contacting healthcare providers, taking breaks from caregiving duties, and making time for activities you enjoy.

For more information on empathy, search for additional resources online or contact a professional.

¹ Levine, A. (2017, December 04). Simple Ways to Care with Empathy. Retrieved from <https://amadaseniorcare.com/blog/2017/11/simple-ways-to-care-with-empathy/>

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

A Loving Touch

Loving touch – whether it be a gentle caress, holding hands, or a warm embrace – has numerous positive effects leading to healthy brain development in younger years and mental and emotional well-being throughout life. Touch gives a sense of body ownership, safety, and comfort.

Experiencing physical touch on a regular basis increases levels of the hormone oxytocin¹ which:

- Lowers stress levels
- Decreases blood pressure
- Improves mood
- Increases pain tolerance
- Alleviates headaches
- Enhances sleep quality
- Boosts self-esteem

Overall, affectionate physical touch makes us feel less alone and more connected.

Techniques to Provide a Loving Touch	
Friends and Family	A Partner
1. Hug when saying hello or goodbye	1. Hold their hand
2. High five or fist bump	2. Kiss when saying hello or goodbye
3. Massage their neck, back, hands, or feet	3. Massage their neck, back, hands, or feet
4. Brush their hair	4. Brush their hair
5. Kiss their cheek or forehead	5. Dance together
	6. Cuddle while talking

Before trying these techniques, get permission from the care recipient to ensure that they are comfortable and consult their doctor to confirm that there are no health conflicts.

¹ The Power of Touch and What It Means for the Elderly. (2014, April 4).

Chapter 4:
**Planning for Financial,
Legal, and Healthcare
Aspects of Aging**

Advance Care Planning

Advance care planning, also known as life care planning, is the process of thinking about what you would want to happen in a situation where you cannot speak for yourself. **This process includes two important decisions:**¹

- Who will speak for you if you cannot speak for yourself?
- What would you want that person to say?

If the care recipient is still able to speak for themselves, you may sit down and start a conversation with them as soon as possible. The care recipient can let you know and state in writing who would make decisions on their behalf, what they value most in life, and how they would want to be treated in specific health or medical circumstances.²



These wishes can be recorded by completing an **Advance Health Care Directive (AHCD)**, which is a legal document that allows you to:

- Choose who will speak for your healthcare decisions
- Detail your wishes for medical care
- Express your priorities and values

As people age, their goals, priorities, and wishes for advance care planning may change. Major events – such as entering a new decade, experiencing a decline in health, or losing a close friend or family member – are good opportunities to take another look at your AHCD.³ You can change your AHCD at any time, and it is important to keep this as up to date as possible.

Overall, there is no better time to start planning for you and the care recipient's future than now so you and the care recipient can get the care wanted.

For more information about advance care planning, visit Kaiser Permanente's website at <https://m.kp.org/southern-california/health-wellness/life-care-plan> or conduct your own research.

¹ Prochnow, J. J. (2017, November). Welcome to Life Care Planning. Retrieved from <https://m.kp.org/southern-california/health-wellness/life-care-plan>

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

Planning for Future Financial Decision Making

Managing finances for both you and the care recipient is complicated. Discussing finances sooner rather than later is key to making this process a little bit simpler.

If the care recipient is able to discuss finances, have them designate a person who they would like to handle their finances in the future. They should teach the designated person about their investments, accounts, insurances, and other financial information.

If you are the designated person, make sure you know where the following documents are located:¹

- Durable power of attorney (for the caregiver)
- Living will
- Will
- Trust documents
- Investments (i.e. stock and bond certificates)
- Retirement benefits (i.e. Social Security)
- Loan agreements
- Health insurance policies
- Automobile insurance policies and titles
- Homeowner's insurance, deed, and mortgage papers
- Recent billing statements (i.e. utilities, credit card)
- Medical bills
- Tax records and forms



If you need assistance with taking over the care recipient's finances:²

- Visit an advisor at their financial institution
- Bank online
- Consolidate credit cards
- Speak with a financial planner

For more information about planning for future financial decision making, contact a financial professional.

¹ Take Care: A Guide for Family Caregivers. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/caregiving/take-care-a-guide-for-family-caregivers>

² Ibid.

Financial Resources

- **BenefitsCheckUp (for those who are 65 years old and older)**
 - To discover which government programs, supplements, and services you may qualify for, visit: <https://www.benefitscheckup.org/>
- **Benefit Finder**
 - To discover which government programs, supplements, and services you may qualify for, visit: <https://www.benefits.gov/>
- **Long-Term Care Insurance**
 - To find out more about this support service, visit: <https://longtermcare.acl.gov/>
- **Medicaid**
 - To learn more about qualifying and applying for coverage, visit the Medicaid website: <https://www.medicaid.gov/>
- **Medicare**
 - To get more information about this coverage program, visit the Medicare website: <https://www.medicare.gov/>
- **State Welfare Programs**
 - To learn more about available state welfare programs, visit the Department of Health and Human Services website: <https://www.welfareinfo.org/welfare-department/>
- **Supplemental Security Income (SSI)**
 - To learn more about qualifying for and receiving assistance, visit the Social Security Administration website: <https://www.ssa.gov/ssi/>
- **Tax Incentives**
 - To see if you qualify for a tax break because you care for your loved one, view IRS Publication 502: <https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p502.pdf>
- **The Family Medical Leave Act**
 - To take unpaid, job-protected leave to care for the care recipient, understand your rights and qualifications: <https://www.dol.gov/whd/fmla/>
- **Veteran-Directed Home and Community-Based Services Program**
 - To learn about qualifying for assistance, visit the Disabled American Veterans website; <https://www.dav.org/caregiver/veteran-home-service-program/>

Enter your monthly expenses for the following items, then total each category and add all categories together for your total monthly expenses.

Housing/Utilities

Rent/Mortgage \$ _____
 Heating \$ _____
 Electricity \$ _____
 Water/sewage \$ _____
 Trash service \$ _____
 Phones \$ _____
 Home maintenance \$ _____
 Cleaning supplies \$ _____
 Total \$ _____

Transportation

Gas \$ _____
 Car payment(s) \$ _____
 Car inspection \$ _____
 Car maintenance \$ _____
 Car registration \$ _____
 Public transit \$ _____
 Parking \$ _____
 Tolls \$ _____
 Total \$ _____

Insurance (if not deducted from payroll)

Car \$ _____
 Homeowner \$ _____
 Health \$ _____
 Life \$ _____
 Disability \$ _____
 Total \$ _____

Food

Groceries \$ _____
 School lunches \$ _____
 Work-related \$ _____
 Total \$ _____

Medical

Doctor's Visits \$ _____
 Dental \$ _____
 Medications \$ _____
 Total \$ _____

Childcare

Daycare \$ _____
 Babysitter \$ _____
 Child support \$ _____
 Total \$ _____

Donations

Total \$ _____

Education

Tuition \$ _____
 Books/supplies \$ _____
 Total \$ _____

Personal

Haircuts \$ _____
 Toiletries \$ _____
 Tobacco products \$ _____
 Alcohol products \$ _____
 Clothing \$ _____
 Laundry \$ _____
 Other \$ _____
 Total \$ _____

Entertainment

Sports, movies, etc. \$ _____
 Streaming services \$ _____
 Cable/satellite TV \$ _____
 Restaurants \$ _____
 Internet/WiFi \$ _____
 Gambling \$ _____
 Fitness/social clubs \$ _____
 Vacation/travel \$ _____
 Hobbies \$ _____
 Total \$ _____

Debts

Student loans \$ _____
 Credit card \$ _____
 Medical bills \$ _____
 Personal loan \$ _____
 Total \$ _____

Savings

Emergency fund \$ _____
 Down payment fund \$ _____
 Retirement \$ _____
 Total \$ _____

Gifts

Birthdays \$ _____
 Holidays \$ _____
 Total \$ _____

Total Monthly Expenses
 \$ _____

Record Keeping

Arranging a system of care for you and the care recipient is complex. There is a lot of information to keep track of, from doctor's appointments to medication management to transportation. Organizing records can help make the caregiving process a bit less stressful.



Consider the following tips for staying organized:¹

- Set up a notebook, computer folder, or caregiver app to keep all records in the same place
- Take notes each time you contact a healthcare provider or other professional, including date, name of the person you talked to, and what you discussed
- Make a weekly calendar of appointments, family and friend visits, and other activities
- Keep a detailed list of medications and bring this to each doctor's appointment
- Arrange for regular delivery of needed supplies

For an example of how to keep organized records, use Next step in Care's A Family Caregiver's Planner for Care at Home at https://nextstepincare.org/uploads/File/Care_Planner.pdf or conduct your own research.

¹ A Family Caregiver's Guide to Care Coordination. (2009). Retrieved from https://www.nextstepincare.org/next_step_in_care_guides/307/Care_Coordination#Tips

Chapter 5:

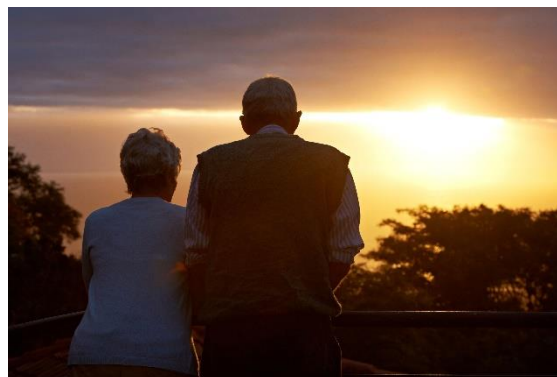
Improving Safety

Wandering

The majority of people with dementia tend to wander away from their caregiver or home.¹ A person with dementia may become confused and not remember their address. To keep the care recipient safe and give you some peace of mind, know how to prevent the care recipient from wandering and becoming lost.²

Signs that the care recipient is wandering include:³

- Returning from a walk or drive later than usual
- Struggling to locate familiar places such as the bathroom, bedroom, or kitchen
- Trying to “go home” even when at home
- Moving restlessly
- Acting anxious in crowded areas



To prevent wandering and protect the care recipient, consider the following techniques:⁴

- Make sure the person has some kind of identification on them at all times, such as a medical bracelet or labeled clothing
- Let neighbors and local police know the care recipient wanders, and ask them to contact you if the person is seen alone
- Keep a recent photograph or video of the care recipient to help police in the case they become lost
- Install locks either high or low on exterior doors so the care recipient cannot open doors
- Install an “announcing system” that sounds when a door is opened
- Keep signs of departure, including shoes and suitcases, out of sight
- Secure your yard with fencing and a locked gate
- Enroll the care recipient in the MedicAlert® + Alzheimer’s Association Safe Return® Program (call 1-888-572-8566 to find the program in your area)

For more information on how to protect the care recipient from wandering, visit <https://www.alz.org/help-support/caregiving/safety/medicalalert-safe-return> or conduct your own research.

¹ Wandering. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.alz.org/help-support/caregiving/stages-behaviors/wandering?lang=en-US>

² Wandering and Alzheimer's Disease. (2018, August 27). Retrieved from <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/wandering-and-alzheimers-disease>

³ Wandering. (n.d.).

⁴ Wandering and Alzheimer's Disease. (2018, August 27).

Medication Management

Medications include:

- Prescriptions
- Over-the-counter substances
- Mail order vitamins and supplements
- Homeopathic remedies
- Alternative medications

To safely take medications, tell your doctor all medications that you or the care recipient are taking. **Ask your doctor detailed questions about new medications that they prescribe you or the care recipient, such as:**¹



- What is the name of the medicine and why am I taking it?
- What medical condition does this medicine treat?
- Should I take the medicine with food or not? Is there anything I should not eat or drink when taking this medicine? Are there any other restrictions?
- Will this medicine react with other medicines I am taking?
- What side effects can I expect? What should I do if I have a problem?

Write down your doctor's answers to these questions to remember any special instructions that they provide.

Tips for Safe Medication Management ²	
Keeping Track of Medicine	Taking Medicine Safely
1. Make a list of all medicines you or the care recipient take	1. Read and follow all instructions on medicine labels
2. Keep all written information about medicines in an easy-to-access file	2. Use the correct dosage
3. Track expiration dates	3. Take medicine on time by using timers, pill boxes, or a calendar
4. Store medicines out of reach of young children and in a cool place away from sources of heat	4. Report any problems experienced with the medication
5. Ask the pharmacy to print instructions and restrictions in large font on the prescription bottle	5. Avoid drinking alcohol
	6. Take medicine until your doctor says it is alright to stop
	7. Do not take medicines prescribed for another person
	8. Order all medications from the same pharmacy

For more information on safe medication management, talk to a healthcare professional.

¹ Safe Use of Medicines for Older Adults. (2017, May 23). Retrieved from <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/safe-use-medicines-older-adults>

² Ibid.

Medication Management Worksheet

Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Pharmacy Name: _____

Pharmacy Phone Number: _____

Primary Healthcare Provider Name: _____

Provider Phone Number: _____

Name of Medication	Dosage (mg)	What is it for?

Over-the-counter medications and homeopathic remedies/supplements (include all that are used regularly):

Allergies:

Reducing Risk of Falls

One in four people 65 years old and older falls each year.¹ Falls can result in physical injury and a loss of independence.

Falls, however, are not something that come with age. With proper attention and techniques, they can be prevented.



Tips to Prevent Falls ²			
Speak Up	Keep Moving	Have Annual Checks	Make Home Safe
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Discuss fall risks and prevention with your healthcare provider 2. Tell your healthcare provider when a fall has occurred 3. Keep an updated list of medications 4. Ask your healthcare provider about Vitamin D supplements to improve bone and muscle health 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Participate in activities that improve balance and strength (i.e. Tai Chi, yoga, dancing, walking, etc.) 2. Stay active to improve confidence when moving 3. Ask your healthcare provider about the best exercise program for you and the care recipient 4. Use an assistive device, like a cane or walker, as needed 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Schedule annual physical, vision, and hearing checkups and medication evaluation 2. Replace eyeglasses, as needed 3. Ask your healthcare provider to check the care recipient's feet once a year 4. Wear supportive footwear 5. See a foot specialist, if needed 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Keep floors free from clutter 2. Remove throw rugs 3. Install grab bars in the bathroom 4. Install handrails and lights on staircases 5. Make sure each room has a lot of light 6. Ensure good lighting outside and around the home and driveway

For more information about reducing the risk of falls, visit the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's website <https://www.cdc.gov/homeandrecreationalafety/falls/index.html> or contact a healthcare provider.

¹ Family Caregivers: Protect Your Loved Ones from Falling. (2018). Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

² Ibid.

Emergency & Disaster Planning

Natural disasters – such as hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, fires, tornadoes, and snowstorms – can completely disrupt normal living. These emergencies cannot be prevented, but they can be prepared for. Even though an emergency might never happen, there is always a chance that it will occur.



Tips to Prepare for an Emergency & Disaster ¹		
Know the Basics	Prepare Emergency Supplies	Make a Personal Plan
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Learn about risks in your specific community2. Have an emergency checklist3. Know how to evacuate and where the nearest emergency shelter is4. Know how to turn off valves for household utilities (i.e. gas, water, electricity)5. Designate someone out-of-area as an emergency contact6. Get to know your neighbors	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Enough water to last 3-6 days per household member2. Easy-to-access flashlights3. First aid kit4. List of medications and 7-day supply5. Spare batteries6. Can-opener7. Water-proof matches8. Cash9. Emergency contact list10. Personal hygiene items11. Change of clothing12. Walking shoes13. Blanket14. Dust masks15. Breakfast bars16. Pet food and related items, if needed	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ask your healthcare provider about emergency procedures for the care recipient's condition2. Register with your local fire department if you or the care recipient are disabled3. Know how to accommodate for your specific needs during an emergency4. Share your plan with your family and friends

Preparing an emergency checklist and supplies will take time and attention, but will provide peace of mind in knowing that you are prepared for this worst-case scenario. Share emergency preparedness tips with your friends and neighbors so they know your needs and can help during an emergency situation.²

For more information about emergency and disaster preparedness, visit the Administration for Community Living's website at <https://acl.gov/news-and-events/acl-blog/emergency-preparedness-month-disasters-dont-plan-ahead-you-can> or conduct your own research.

¹ Just In Case: Emergency Readiness for Older Adults and Caregivers. (2016). Retrieved from <https://acl.gov/news-and-events/acl-blog/emergency-preparedness-month-disasters-dont-plan-ahead-you-can>

² Ibid.

Driving

Age-related changes in vision, hearing, and reflexes can impair driving ability. Discovering that the care recipient is no longer able to drive is a challenging – but significant – step in caregiving, as age-related changes increase risk of motor vehicle accidents.¹

If you are concerned that the care recipient is no longer a safe driver and you are not able to observe them driving, look out for the following signs:²

- Multiple vehicle crashes, “close calls,” or new dents in the vehicle
- Multiple traffic tickets or warnings within the last couple of years
- Comments from friends or neighbors about driving
- Anxiety about driving at night
- Vision, hearing, or movement impairments that could impact driving
- Complaints about speed, lane changes, or behavior of fellow drivers
- Encouragement from a doctor to stop driving

Discussing driving with the care recipient is often difficult, as driving plays a major role in remaining independent. **If you think the care recipient should no longer be driving, consider the following techniques:³**



- Be prepared with alternative transportation information (see the “Transportation” section for suggestions)
- Use the ‘I’ voice rather than ‘you’ voice (i.e. “I am concerned about your safety” compared to “You are not a safe driver”; view the “You’ vs. ‘I’ Statements” section for suggestions)
- Focus on the importance of safety and offer help to preserve independence
- Remain positive and supportive

For more information about driving as an older adult, visit the National Institute on Aging’s website at <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/older-drivers> or conduct your own research.

¹ Older Drivers. (2018, December 12). Retrieved from <https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/older-drivers>

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

Lighting

The fact that vision often worsens with age is well-known. Everyday tasks, such as reading and walking, become more difficult without clear vision. Making sure spaces are well-lit can help lessen the impact of age-related changes in vision.

Here are some suggestions to improve lighting in your home and create a safer environment for you and the care recipient:¹

- Install light sources directly above frequently used spaces, such as a cutting board, laundry table, or couch
- Get floor lamps with three-way bulbs or flexible necks so you can point light where you need it
- Install lights, both indoors and outdoors, in all staircases, landings, and entries
- Make sure there is enough light in your bathtub and shower, and use brightly colored shower curtains
- Add skylights to your kitchen, bathroom, or family room
- Clean all windows



When installing more light sources, remember to take proper safety precautions:²

- Make sure lamp cords or wires are not exposed by tucking them behind furniture or fastening them to a wall
- Only use fire-safe extension cords when needed
- Turn off fixtures and switches before replacing light bulbs
- Hire a licensed professional for electrical work

For more information about improving lighting in your home, visit the Light Research Center's website at <https://www.lrc.rpi.edu/programs/lightHealth/AARP/index.asp> or conduct your own research.

¹ Lighting Your Home for Safety. (2007). Retrieved from https://assets.aarp.org/external_sites/caregiving/preparing/lighting_your_home.html

² Ibid.

Chapter 6:

Additional Resources

Transportation

Older adults often experience physical and cognitive changes that limit their ability to drive. If you or your loved one are no longer able to drive, there are many transportation options to help maintain independence:¹

- **Dial-A-Ride:** transports multiple passengers who are picked up and dropped off at different points
- **Paratransit Service:** door-to-door and curb-to-curb transportation offered by public transit agencies using mini-buses or small vans; contact your local senior center or Area Agency on Aging for information
- **Medicaid Non-Emergency Medical Transportation:** available to people with Medicaid to travel to and from medical services
- **Public Transportation:** bus and rail services with set schedules and fixed routes available through your local public transit agency
- **Taxi Service:** on-demand rides between locations of your choice
- **Shared Ride Services:** private pay transportation provided via websites or mobile cellphone apps
- **Travel Training:** free, hands-on instruction provided by public transit agencies to help older adults and disabled persons learn to travel safely and independently
- **Transportation Vouchers Program:** fare assistance programs, including vouchers for transportation services, provided by social service organizations



To learn about the transportation services available in your community and find the option that best fits your needs, contact your local Area Agency on Aging, use the Eldercare Locator at www.eldercare.gov, or contact the National Aging and Disability Transportation Center at (866) 983-3222.

¹ Transportation Options for Older Adults and People with Disabilities. (2018). Retrieved from <https://www.n4a.org/content.asp?contentid=222>

Palliative Care



What is Palliative Care?

Palliative care is specialized medical care for people with serious illnesses. Its objective is to provide patients with relief from the symptoms of pain and stress.

Palliative care offers an added layer of support to help address the social, spiritual, and psychological issues patients and their families face when confronted with a serious illness.

Patients seen in Palliative Medicine visits...

- Have severe, life-limiting disease or face a life-threatening condition.
- Require help to control pain, fatigue, distress, and other symptoms.
- Need supportive care while receiving existing regimens of treatment including surgeries, chemotherapy, intravenous medication, or other procedures from their primary physician and other specialists.

Support.
Compassion.
Comfort.

Being there for patients,
families, and caregivers

Kaiser Permanente is a team of providers whose passion is to support you and your loved ones medically, emotionally, and spiritually as you go through this journey.

Our Mission

- To provide reliable pain and symptom control so patients can begin to feel better immediately.
- Answer questions about the illness and alternatives for treatment.
- Discuss and document the patient's treatment goals so everyone understands and respects what the patient wants.
- Offer advice, support, and resources so that patients and caregivers can manage the stress of life-limiting disease.

Outpatient Palliative Clinic

Living with a serious illness is tough. There are so many things running through the minds of you and your loved ones. Kaiser Permanente is here to assist.

Palliative Medicine staff is on-site Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at:

4950 West Sunset Boulevard

3rd Floor

Los Angeles, California 90027

Direct Line: 323-783-3699

Kaiser Permanente staff is available during office hours to assist you for any questions you may have or if you have worsening symptoms.

Telephone Appointment Visit (TAV) is also available for this department.

kp.org/losangeles

Meal Options

As people age, they face physical and cognitive declines or financial hardships that take away independence. For these reasons, many older adults have little to no access to food.

Meals on Wheels is a federally-supported program that provides nutritious meals and companionship to older adults.¹ This program operates in almost every community throughout the nation. Meals on Wheels provides meals in senior centers or other community facilities and home-delivers meals to those who cannot transport themselves.²



Meals on Wheels provides meals to adults who are 60 years old or older, and meals range from no cost to full price depending on the community. Even so, no older adult will be denied a meal.³

To apply for services from Meals on Wheels for yourself or care recipient, find your local program at <https://www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org/>, call Meals on Wheels at (888) 998-6325, or contact your local senior center.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), otherwise known as food stamps, provides nutrition benefits to supplement a food budget for individuals and families in need.⁴ This program, which comes in the form of a credit card-like card, allows people to purchase health food. For more information about SNAP, visit their website at www.fns.usda.gov/snap or call (800)-221-5689.

Food banks also provide food to qualified individuals and families so they can thrive. Feeding America operates over 200 food banks in communities throughout the nation.⁵ For more information about food banks, visit their website at www.feedingamerica.org or call (800) 771-2303.

¹ Find a Meals on Wheels Provider Near You. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.mealsonwheelsamerica.org/find-meals>

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program>

⁵ Feeding America. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.feedingamerica.org/>

Support Groups

Finding social support is one of the best ways caregivers can cope with the stress, challenges, and difficult emotions that come with caregiving. Support groups are a space to vent, get advice, share stories, and connect with people who truly understand your situation.¹



The following are just a few of the many benefits of joining a family caregiver support group:²

- **Venting and validating:** feel heard and understood by group members
- **Sharing and comparing:** listen to useful information, tips, and opinions about types of healthcare providers, treatments, self-care strategies, and more
- **Getting peer advice:** learn about helpful tips and community resources from others who have experienced similar situations and needs
- **Uniting and advocating:** know that you are not alone
- **Finding community:** discover a sense of belonging

Support groups can come in varying forms, including online and in-person.

If you would like to build your personal community and join a support group, the following tools can help you find one in your area:³

- The Community Resource Finder (visit <https://www.communityresourcefinder.org/>)
- The Family Care Navigator (visit <https://www.caregiver.org/family-care-navigator>)
- The Eldercare Locator (visit <https://eldercare.acl.gov/> or call 1-800-677-116)

¹ Support System Tools for Family Caregivers. (2016, October 19). Retrieved from <https://www.aarp.org/caregiving/answers/info-2017/family-caregivers-support-groups.html>

² Jacobs, B. J. (2016, September 28). Supportive Community and Solace for Caregivers. Retrieved from <https://www.aarp.org/caregiving/life-balance/info-2017/support-groups-bjj.html>

³ Support System Tools for Family Caregivers. (2016, October 19).

The Handyworker Grant Program Los Angeles County

The Handyworker Grant Program funds minor home repairs with the purpose of preserving existing homes and ensuring the health and safety of low- and moderate-income homeowners within the Fourth and Fifth Supervisorial Districts in Los Angeles County.¹

Applicants must meet the following criteria to receive funding:²

Homeowners	Property
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Older adult (62 years old or older), or handicapped, permanently disabled, single head of household, or large family (five or more people) - Occupy and are listed on the title/grant deed of the property - Have ownership interest in the property for at least 12 months - Low-income 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Located in the Fourth and Fifth Supervisorial Districts in Los Angeles County - Owner-occupied - Single-family residence - Minor repairs that are health and safety related (i.e. garbage disposal, installation of smoke alarms, minor plumbing repairs)

If you are eligible for the program and want to apply:³

- Collect the following documents:
 - o Documents showing your age and disability status (i.e. photo ID, SSI letter stating disability status, etc.)
 - o Documents showing your income from all sources (i.e. Social Security Administration award letter, Workers Compensation disability statement, pay stubs, etc.)
 - o Documents showing property ownership (i.e. trust agreement, property tax bill, etc.)
 - o Documents showing that you live on the property (i.e. utility bill)
- Call the Los Angeles Housing and Community Investment Department at (213) 808-8803, the toll-free hotline (213) 808-8918, or the hearing-impaired hotline (213) 473-3231 to find a partnering agency near you
- Bring all required documents in-person to the agency's office to submit your application

For more information visit Los Angeles County website at <https://www.lacdc.org/for-homeowners/home-improvement/handyworker-program> or email the project managers:

- **Lonii Prevost, 4th District Project Manager (email: Lonii.Prevost@lacdc.org)**
- **Cindy Tei, 5th District Project Manager (email: Cindy.Tei@lacdc.org)**

¹ Handyworker Program. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.lacdc.org/for-homeowners/home-improvement/handyworker-program>

² Ibid.

³ Services for Low-Income Seniors. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://hcidla.lacity.org/low-income-sr>

In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) Program

The IHSS program aims to help people live safely in their own homes for as long as they desire. If you are 65 years old or older, blind, and/or disabled, you may be eligible to receive support from this program.¹

IHSS provides the following types of services:²

- Personal care (i.e. dressing, bathing, feeding, etc.)
- Paramedical services (i.e. injections, wound care, etc.)
- House cleaning
- Cooking
- Shopping
- Laundry
- Accompaniment to and from medical appointments



To apply for the IHSS program:³

1. Contact the IHSS program in your county
2. Provide information to the county representative
3. Allow a social worker to visit your home
4. Complete the Health Care Certification Form
5. If approved, you will receive notice of what services you will be receiving

To learn more about IHSS and locate the program nearest to you, visit the IHSS website at <http://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/IHSS> or call (866) 376-7066.

¹ Overview of the IHSS Services. (2017, February 9). Retrieved July 31, 2019, from <http://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/IHSS/Fact-Sheets>

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

MyCareMyChoice

If you benefit from Medicare and Medi-Cal, MyCareMyChoice provides resources to help you get personalized help.

What does Medicare cover? ¹	What does Medi-Cal cover? ²
Doctors	Medicare co-pays and deductibles
Prescription drugs	Some medical equipments, supplies, and services
Urgent care and hospital visits	IHSS, adult day centers, and transportation
Short-term nursing facility stays	Long-term nursing facility stays

MyCareMyChoice.org helps maximize your benefits with the following tools:³

- Care choices in your ZIP code
- Contact information for local choices
- Worksheets and checklists
- Ways to get personalized help

To learn more, visit [MyCareMyChoice.org](https://www.mycaremychoice.org).



¹ MyCareMyChoice. (n.d.). Retrieved July 31, 2019, from <https://www.mycaremychoice.org/en>

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

General Resources

- **ARCH National Respite Network and Resource Center**

- Find programs and services to take a break from caregiving. Visit <https://archrespite.org/> or call 703.256.2084



- **Area Agencies on Aging**

- Locate your local Area Agency on Aging for help finding and coordinating services. Visit <https://acl.gov/programs/aging-and-disability-networks/area-agencies-aging> or call 1-800-677-1116

- **Caregiver Resource Centers (California only)**

- Find your local Caregiver Resource Center for consultation, counseling, education, and guidance. Visit <https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/MH/Pages/AdultsCaregiverResourceCenters.aspx>

- **Department of Veterans Affairs Caregiver Support Program**

- Access support and services if you are caring for a veteran. Visit <https://www.caregiver.va.gov/> or call 1-855-260-3274

- **Family Caregiver Alliance**

- Gain state-by-state information, support, and access to resources. Visit <https://www.caregiver.org/> or call 1-800-445-8106

- **Local Caregiver Support Services**

- Locate available help in your community using the Eldercare Locator. Visit <https://eldercare.acl.gov/Public/Index.aspx> or call 1-800-677-1116

- **Senior Centers**

- Connect with vital community services and support programs at your local senior center. Visit <https://www.ncoa.org/news/resources-for-reporters/get-the-facts/senior-center-facts/> or call 1-571-527-3900

- **USC Family Caregiver Support Center**

- Learn more about support services, including education, respite, and individual consultations. Visit <https://www.fcsc.usc.edu/> or call 855-872-6060

