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Family Caregiver Resources

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When a loved one needs help

10 warning signs



Older adults deserve their autonomy. And at the same time, they may need help and don't realize it. It's hard for family members to know when a serious problem is brewing.

Review these 10 warning signs from the Administration on Aging. If any of them seem to apply, don't jump to conclusions! Consider, instead, an assessment by an expert in aging. An Aging Life Care™ Manager can provide a holistic perspective addressing the biological, psychological, and social changes; and make recommendations for next steps based on the individual needs and concerns of your loved one.

Here are some changes to be watchful of:

- **Eating.** Losing weight, no appetite, missing meals. Or eating more.
- **Cleanliness.** Neglected household chores, wearing dirty clothes, not bathing, neglected nails and teeth, bad breath.
- **Skin.** Burns, unexplained cuts or bruises, sores (especially on the feet).
- **Ability to move around.** Unsteady gait, dizziness, difficulty getting up from an armless chair, inability to walk more than 1–2 blocks, difficulty getting in and out of a car.
- **Driving.** Dents and scratches on the car, drivers honking, friends expressing concern, two tickets in two years, two accidents in two years.
- **Money.** Not paying bills, paying bills twice, losing or hiding money, unusual purchases, overly concerned about money, unwilling to discuss finances.
- **Mood or behavior.** Paranoid or agitated, unusually loud, unusually irritable, inappropriate behavior.
- **Withdrawal.** Loss of interest in things that used to be pleasurable, social isolation, hopelessness, crying, irritability, changes in sleep or eating patterns, talk about suicide.
- **Forgetfulness.** Unopened mail, piles of newspapers, unfilled prescriptions, missing appointments, unremembered conversations, misplacing objects.
- **Reasoning and memory.** Repetitive questions, difficulty completing familiar tasks, not recognizing familiar places, problems following conversations, poor judgment.

If you have concerns, give us a call at 707.477.0700. Let's start the conversation.



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Elder Pages Online supports older adults in [Your Service Area] as they plan for their later years.

Give us a call at [Your Phone] to find out how we can support you.

What help is needed?

Begin by taking stock of your loved one's abilities and tasks he or she may need assistance with.

- **Chores.** Laundry, yardwork, housekeeping.
- **Meals.** Cooking and cleanup.
- **Medication management.** Taking medicines as directed. Filling prescriptions and getting refills.
- **Transportation.** For errands, the doctor, church...
- **Medical advocacy.** Talking with doctors, deciding on treatments.
- **Help in a crisis.** Someone nearby who is available on short notice in case of an emergency.
- **Money management.** Paying bills, balancing the checkbook, banking. Handling investments.
- **Dealing with insurance.** Managing benefits and handling paperwork and reimbursements from Medicare, Medi-gap, prescription insurance, long-term care, disability and the Veterans Administration.
- **Legal assistance.** Will or living trust, durable power of attorney, health care power of attorney.
- **Home maintenance.** Making needed repairs and installing safety features (e.g., bathroom grab bars).
- **Financial assistance.** Low-cost programs.
- **Social visits and emotional support.** Getting together with friends, talking with clergy or a counselor.
- **Check-ins.** A knowledgeable person to touch base periodically to see if there are new changes or needs for help.

Some tasks can be done by friends and family, but not always reliably and usually just short term. An Aging Life Care Manager can save you time and energy by directing you to the most appropriate and cost-effective resources.

Unlike some advisors who get kickbacks, an Aging Life Care Manager does a thorough assessment and advocates for your loved one and his or her specific needs. You are spared inappropriate placements, duplicate services, and poor-quality care. Their experience will help you get it right the first time.

In addition, an Aging Life Care Manager can check in periodically, coordinate these multiple services, and be on-call in the event of an emergency. Aging Life Care Managers are experts in aging well, allowing you and your loved one to talk about the difficulties of this passage and receive insightful support and assistance in both finding and accepting care.

Getting realistic. Creating a team.

It's tempting to feel that you can do it all. But it's likely you have a busy life of your own. Perhaps a partner, children, or a career. Putting these on hold for a short-term urgent need might be realistic. But over the long haul, you will need help.

- **Does your relative agree that he or she needs assistance?** If not, you will need help broaching the subject and navigating the dance of care.
- **What are your other obligations?** Do you have work and personal responsibilities that require your time? Is there flexibility in your life? At what cost?
- **Do you live far away or close by?** Family members spend a lot of time on the phone trying to find local resources. And it's hard to know which ones are appropriate for your situation or provide the quality you want. Triple that for long-distance kin, who also have to budget time and money for travel.
- **Is your relationship strained?** Given your current degree of closeness, how much can you realistically dedicate to supporting your relative?
- **What resources are available?** Can your relative pay for help? Are veteran benefits a possibility?
- **Are siblings involved? United?** Often there is discord. A family meeting is advisable to divide up tasks fairly.
- **What are your strengths? Limits?** No one can be all things to all people. Take on those tasks you enjoy and can do easily and well. Find others to do those that you find challenging.

Assemble a team. Caring for an aging loved one can be daunting. An Aging Life Care Manager can save you time and frustration by creating a personalized care plan, recommending high-quality and appropriate local services, overcoming your loved one's resistance, and coordinating all the moving parts to give everyone peace of mind.

Contact us at 707.477.0700



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