

“We Need a Coach! - We Have Become a Team Without a Leader for Mom’s Care”

When you have 3 doctors, 3 siblings and the checkbook telling you what to do, decision making becomes a challenge. If you have a team, it usually has a captain and a coach. In family care of aging parents or even in your own care, who will fill that role?



Linda Fodrini-Johnson, MA, MFT, CMC, is the Founder and Executive Director of Eldercare Services and is a Fellow and Recent Past President of the National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers.

Well, in the situation represented above, the “coach” would be the Professional Geriatric Care Manager and you would be the “captain” of the team (given you have legal authority). If you need a coach for yourself – there is no problem with the authority, you are the captain!

May is National Geriatric Care Management Month, so I thought I would give you a few stories of how we have made a difference for adults without family advocates and those who have families, but struggle with decisions, medical advocacy, options for housing, home care, and possibly with behaviors related to Alzheimer’s or other dementias.

Story #1: Andy and Ruth, husband and wife, came to see me in their late 80’s wanting to be sure that someone could take care of Ruth if anything happened to Andy. They had no close family members so were on their own. Ruth was legally blind, but otherwise quite healthy. We continued to meet twice a year and then Ruth suddenly died, not Andy. Andy lived at home for a few years, had a serious medical incident and ended up in the ICU. If I had not visited, the medical team would not have known about Andy’s previous high functioning and active lifestyle so the expectation was that he would just receive comfort care. Instead, I was able to guide the process with what I knew about Andy so he was given all the care needed. Now, in his mid 90’s, Andy has moved to assisted living with the care

management he needs to have a high quality life – full of travel, fun and hobbies. He says he owes his quality of life to his Care Manager and his personal assistant / attendant.

Story #2: Susie and her sister, Amy, both live at a great distance from their mom who is 90 years old, has macular degeneration and some mild memory loss. The sisters called after the doctor suggested that they get a Care Manager to help them manage Mom at home as she was becoming a target for scams due to her poor vision and increasing problems with memory (the perfect target for scammers). The daughters had discovered that Mom was making almost daily donations to the same organizations, spending over \$2,000 a month – she felt good about herself and had no idea that she had given so much. The Care Manager was able to make some changes and suggestions that stopped the scamming. Mom, although having memory loss, was set up with systems that allowed her to stay independent and in her own condo for 4 years before she needed to move.

Story #3: Mark is 66 and he is still working in his own business about 60 hours a week. His wife, Judy, is only 63 but has been showing increasing signs of memory loss. He didn’t know where to turn as her safety became a concern. A Professional Care Manager helped

get the evaluation with the right team who designed a plan that keeps Judy safe and happy during the day and gives the two of them more quality time in the evenings. As Judy progresses in her dementia, the Care Manager will work closely with Mark, coaching him with challenges and helping him with decisions. This relationship between the professional and the family will typically last 3 to 15 years. The Care Manager will work with Mark as he needs to make various decisions facing him. And, the Care Manager, who knows the couple well, will always keep their values front and center as ideas and options are found and considered.

Care Managers who work with clients through all the transitions and challenges that accompany a longer life, become the family/client life-line, the light and the compass. I have heard over and over again from families that have experienced our work during a crisis, hospitalization or behavioral challenge that they would not have survived without the support and knowledge of their trusted guide and coach – the “Professional Geriatric Care Manager”.

This month we honor those who work long days to secure the safety and the highest quality of life possible for older adults. Included in this group are your Professional Geriatric Care Managers who work with you as the Coach of your care team. We also thank all who trust us with the family you love – it is an honor to work with each of you.

For a list of ways a Professional Care Manager can benefit you, please email Info@EldercareAnswers.com or call Lindsay Freeman, Client Services Intake Coordinator, at (866) 760-1808.



Eldercare Services works with Seniors and their families in Walnut Creek, Alameda County, San Francisco, Marin County and the Tri-Valley, CA.

Visit us on the web at www.EldercareAnswers.com for more information.

Community Classes

Walnut Creek

Dementia: 101

For Families Experiencing the Challenge

3rd Friday of every month from 10 AM to Noon

1808 Tice Valley Blvd., Walnut Creek, CA 94595

Cost for Classes: None

Class Registration:

Please call at least 3 days ahead

For more information regarding classes and support groups, visit us at www.EldercareAnswers.com or call (925) 937-2018 or email us at Info@EldercareAnswers.com

Support Groups

When concerns for aging family members are part of every day life, or when they interfere with work, your health or other relationships, you need to join a support group.

Caring for An Aging Family Member

2nd Thursday of every month from 7 to 8:30 PM

1808 Tice Valley Blvd., Walnut Creek, CA 94595

1st Tuesday of every month from 6 to 7:30 PM

605 A Chenery St., San Francisco, CA 94131

Cost for Support Groups: None

Support Group Registration: Not required

More Info: (925) 937-2018 or (415) 469-8300



*Eldercare
Services*
Advocacy, Care, and Education

Eldercare Services provides Counseling, Support Groups, Home Care, and Care Management to aid Family Caregivers. If you or someone you know could benefit from self-care, give us a call at (866) 760-1808 or email us at Info@EldercareAnswers.com.