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February 2018

THIS MONTH

Caregiving from a Distance: Challenges of Time & Heart

Valentine's Day highlights love to all those we care about, mostly in a romantic way, but also in a more holistic way.

Many of us have memories of Mom or Dad helping us write Valentine cards or baking cupcakes for our class party. Now we find ourselves separated by hours and possibly thousands of miles from our aging parents. We worry about them as they age; every time the phone rings we wonder, "Is this the call?" Sometimes we have to stop our lives and travel long distances to ensure they are getting what they need after a sudden trip to the hospital.

Caring from a distance is truly a challenge, especially if you don't have local family or friends to help you when a problem arises. The second part of this long distance challenge is being certain it is a true emergency. When is it the right time to jump in the car or call the airline? What signals or warning signs should you be paying attention to that can be telling you it's time to advocate and bring in care?

The challenges can come at both ends of the spectrum. From one extreme you might have had your parent tell you the house is falling apart, only to fly out and find a little dry rot. While at the other extreme you hear from a neighbor that your mom broke her dominant arm and didn't want to bother you with it even though she is struggling to care for herself during recovery.

Loving, caring, and balancing your own career and family create challenges of the heart. You are appreciative of your family members' love and the care you received throughout your life. You want to be there for them, but the totality and urgency of your own responsibilities get in the way. You have a career, family and commitments that keep you busy day and night; one more obligation feels like you might get to a breaking point.

About our Founder



Linda Fodrini-Johnson, MA, MFT, CMC is a Licensed Family Therapist and Certified Care Manager. She has been practicing professional care management (now

called aging life care) since 1984. Linda founded Eldercare Services, a full-service care management and home care company in 1989, which now employs over 200 caring people. Eldercare Services has been providing Bay Area families with care management, home care services (caregiving), advocacy, counseling, support groups and education for 28 years.

MONTHLY AFFIRMATION

"I am prepared for any crisis my aging or disabled family member might have."

CONTINUED ➔

In conversations you have with Mom or Dad on the phone, you may hear confusion, memory issues, resistance to suggestions or apathy and you probably will not be sure how to respond or where to begin when you decide to take action.

Here are six Tips & Actions you can take when you are caring from a distance.

1. Keep a current list of medical providers, medical conditions, health history and current medications for your family member.
2. Have names and numbers of friends or neighbors who have a key or know where a key is hidden to your family member's home.
3. Look into technology including sensors that let you know, in real time, about your family member's daily activities.
4. Be sure you have access to medical information. That might mean that you become his or her agent under a "Durable Power of Attorney for Healthcare". Or, you know the person who does hold this power.
5. If your parent lives alone, be sure he or she has an "Emergency Response System" that works outdoors as well as in the home.
6. Have access to a Professional Geriatric Care Manager (PGCM)/Aging Life Care Professional, who can go assess the situation before you fly across country. This person might work as needed or have an "On-Call for You" program. The PGCM can do for you in two hours, what might take you two weeks to resource – this person becomes the conduit between all service providers and helps keep your parent safe. It is good to have this person before a crisis.

About 50% of the clients we serve at Eldercare Services have family members more than two hours away. They are caring and concerned, but can't get to every appointment or oversee the care in the home. Over and over again we are told by clients what a "life-saver" it has been to have an expert guiding them along the way. Having an advocate is such a blessing when keeping the concerned children in the loop. The results of the enrichment that the PGCM is able to add to their parent's life are: fewer surprises and a higher quality of life for their parent.

We can help you locally in the San Francisco Bay Area and VillagePlan.com can help you get connected to a professional Care Manager anywhere in the country.

Both Eldercare Services and Village Plan professionals adhere to a strict code of ethics and a standard of practice. The PGCMs are mostly Master's prepared professionals from social work, counseling, nursing, and other related fields.

Upcoming Events

Caring for Someone with Dementia – Reducing Your Stress

 Feb 13th  5:30pm – 7:00pm

Riding the roller coaster of dementia care? If the emotional ups, downs, & loop-di-loops are making your head spin, our Caregiver Survival series is for you!

Topics include:

- ▶ The major challenges of dementia care
- ▶ Responses and reactions to reduce your stress
- ▶ Self-care activities and mini-support group
- ▶ Resources for coaching and support

No Fee. Advanced registration required.

Class intended for family caregivers or those dealing with the challenges of aging.

Visit <https://eldercareanswers.com/registration-4/> to register.

This month's Speaker Series event is: Mental Illness in the Family?

 Feb 16th  2:00pm – 3:30pm

Presented by: Alicia English, PhD, Director of Clinical Services, Eldercare Services

By learning more about mental illness you can support your family member and find the resources, and support for yourself.

- ▶ Approaches in talking about mental health illness
- ▶ Knowing when something is wrong
- ▶ How to know when to get help for your family member
- ▶ Learn practical tools

No fee, but advanced registration is required.

Visit <https://eldercareanswers.com/registration-5/> to register.

Location of Events:

Eldercare Services, 1808 Tice Valley Blvd., Walnut Creek, CA 94595