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A Home Care Assistance Company



Newsletter

July 2019

THIS MONTH

You don't know what you don't know

If it is true that you don't know what you don't know, then how do you find answers to challenging dilemmas that seem to pop up as you are thrown into the role as a family caregiver? Where do you begin? It was my pleasure to facilitate a panel of family caregivers for an audience of almost 200 caregivers recently. What I learned is that more portals are needed for families to gain information so that they at least know where to take those challenging issues.

This month's newsletter is directed to answering some of those questions that were asked of the panel and especially to me as an expert, experienced professional.

- ▶ *"Dad is remembering less and less and is more confused; he seems to feel less competent and even less of a man. What can we do to bolster his confidence & dignity?"* When someone has a progressive illness, he or she is often quite aware of the decline and can become depressed. It is essential for a family to find ways to engage that family member in activities for which thanks can be expressed for a job well done: such as setting the table, folding laundry, stirring or chopping food. If these tasks are hard, just sitting and talking with them and then thanking them for being with you, that can make all the difference. The local day programs for those with memory issues are also places where all the activities are "failure proof." Those that attend usually come home happy with themselves because they were addressed as an adult and participated in adult activities that didn't tax their abilities. For information on day programs call Senior Information **800-510-2020**.
- ▶ *"Does Long Term Care Insurance play a role in getting support?"* If you or your family member has a LTC policy, look at it carefully or have a home care company like Home Care Assistance look at it for you. Many time families see that their family member can do most of the activities of daily living and they don't activate it. One of the members of our panel worked with a professional Aging Life Care Manager (Geriatric Care Manager) and that professional helped the panelist understand that memory and judgment impairment supersedes the activities of daily living requirement in most policies. In this incidence, the family had an expert to help the couple explore their policy and get it activated - thus cutting the cost of care by the benefits in the insurance. It is my experience that families/individuals wait too long to use these benefits.

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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 30 years.

MONTHLY AFFIRMATION

My fears are stilled by positive thoughts of bright tomorrows.

- ▶ *"How do I get stubborn reluctant Mom into assisted living or a care home? We don't have a conservatorship, but have a Power of Attorney. She has complex dementia and health issues. She is in the hospital now – can a caseworker help with the transition?"* One of our panel members said that now is the time to be creative with not telling the whole truth – I call that using therapeutic fiblets. When someone who needs a higher level of care is hospitalized, that is the perfect time for a transition to a "care setting" with you as the family saying it is part of the discharge plan. But, before you do that, make sure that everyone involved is saying the same thing – prep the therapist or any other service provider before any of them see your family member and discover that home is not safe. They need to back up your story when Mom or Dad needs to stay in this new setting till she or he improves. That is the same line you use over and over again.
- ▶ *"Did you ever have resentful thoughts about your role toward your patient or family member? How did you feel about those thoughts afterward?"* All the panelists said that they had these feelings from time to time. One of them that had no private place so she had to go sit in her car for a few minutes to gain her composure and then return to her role. We are all human and have needs of our own. When we are in that caregiving role it becomes frustrating answering the same questions or giving directions over and over again. Not ever being thanked for giving up your life for their care is difficult. This is where the panelists all said a "support group" or "men's group" was their lifeline to normality and relieved them of any guilt that they might have felt because of their actions. Eldercare Services has a free support group on the 2nd Thursday of every month from 6PM-7:30PM in our Walnut Creek office. If you are looking for a support group out of our area, give the Senior Information office a call: **1-800-510-2020**.
- ▶ *"When my father had a stroke I used the Ombudsman Services to find a good nursing home. They were invaluable in helping me care for him while he was in the nursing home."* This is a free service to help in finding good quality care and it is a service to help advocate for your family members who are not getting the best care in any licensed facility - from small homes to assisted living and skilled nursing homes. They can be reached at 925-685-2070 and serve all of Contra Costa County. However, every state and every county in California has Ombudsman Services – just Google "Ombudsman Services" and your location.


Professional experts called either Geriatric Care Managers or Aging Life Care Professionals are experts with experience – they are your filter for any service challenge and become your Sherpa for the long journey. If you have a question or want a "Road Map," give us a call and together we can take out the speed bumps of this journey of caregiving.

Call us at **925-937-2018** to learn more.

Eldercare Services is now a division of Home Care Assistance, giving you the combination of great expansive caregiving and professional guidance.

Upcoming Events

End of Life Choices: The East Bay Conservation Project

 July 19th  2:00pm – 3:30pm

Presented by: Linda Best and Leslie Dietterick



We will view the documentary, *Extremis*, which follows doctors, patients and their families in various end-of-life scenarios that play out at the Intensive Care Unit at Oakland's Highland Hospital. In this program, we'll answer these questions:

- ▶ How can you ensure that your wishes are carried out by your family?
- ▶ How can you have a heartfelt discussion about end of life choices?
- ▶ What tools are available to help you have these conversations with your family?

Advanced registration required. No fee.

<https://eldercareanswers.com/registration-7/>

Dementia: The Roadmap from Diagnosis to Family Care

 July 24th  5:30pm – 7:00pm

Dementia Education Series:



Join Linda Fodrini-Johnson as she discusses what you need to know, what you need to plan, and what you and your family can do when faced with the challenges of dementia.

- ▶ What is dementia? Where is it diagnosed?
- ▶ Understanding the progression
- ▶ What does a family need to do to prepare for the journey?
- ▶ Protecting dignity and reducing stress in all family members

Advanced registration required. No fee. Class intended for family caregivers or those dealing with the challenges of aging.

<https://eldercareanswers.com/registration-2/>

Dementia: Understanding Behaviors & Finding Solutions

 Aug 7th  5:30pm – 7:00pm

Dementia Education Series:

- ▶ Tools on how to have conversations about needs when denial is present
- ▶ Giving you permission to "stretch the truth" for dignity, safety, and self-esteem
- ▶ Understanding the different types of dementia
- ▶ Understanding why the right diagnosis is important

Advanced registration required. No fee.

<https://eldercareanswers.com/registration-8/>

Location of Events:

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