



August 2010

How Does One Select Home Care?

“Mom needs a little support at home”; “I just had a medical procedure and need 24/7 care for a few days”; “I care for my spouse who has Alzheimer’s and I need respite two days a week.” These are just a few of the situations that send families into searching for a care provider.



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Choices can be overwhelming – do you ask your medical provider, discharge planner, next door neighbor, or search Google to find what you need? Options in choosing the “right” home care are becoming more complicated by the plethora of new agencies seeing the “baby boomer” generation as the new target market.

Many of us read with horror the recent story of the local elder who hired a caregiver privately by searching Craigslist and was subsequently killed by this person!

Just recently I read an article in our local newspaper about a couple who opened up a home care agency after having the experience of being family caregivers. Caring for someone, or even a few people in your family, could give you experience, but it doesn’t prepare you as an “expert” to guide families or deliver care to those who are vulnerable. A good heart and integrity is a first step, but education, experience and skills are paramount in the delivery of excellent care.

Below is a short checklist to help you choose home care:

1) Agencies: Who owns the agency and are they a professional in the field of caregiving or health care? What is the experience/background of the professionals they have on staff? How long have they been providing services in the office you are calling? Many franchises could have opened just this week – yet the corporation is many years old.

2) If you are hiring caregivers: Is this a registry or an agency? With a registry you are the employer with liability for injuries, payroll taxes, bonding and insurance - even if you pay the registry directly. With an agency, ask if they take care of all of this for you and if the caregivers are eligible to work in this country. If hiring privately, consult with your CPA and attorney to be sure you don’t have liabilities that could come back to haunt you.

3) Caregivers: Ask questions about experience, training, criminal background checks and, most of all, supervision. Who trains and supervises them and what is their expertise? How often will they visit and what are they overseeing? Is there on-going training? Does the agency have a newsletter to inform caregivers of new services, safety or other helpful items? Do the caregivers have standards and guidelines – are they aware of what they can and can’t do legally and ethically?

4) Professional Geriatric Care Management: Does the agency have professional care management? Is the person experienced and certified as a Care Manager? Ask about qualifications – just because someone is a health care professional doesn’t qualify them for this role. Are they members of the National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers or do they work for someone who is? Remember this is the

Professional you will want to consult with regarding options in housing, moving, driving, behavioral issues, medical providers, entitlements and yes, of course, stress and grief issues. Many of the professional staff at Eldercare Services are also licensed mental health providers so they can help with life transitions and challenging decisions.

5) Family Education: Does the agency offer any education or support for family members? Do they have guidelines for families hiring in home care?

Finding the right match in caregivers might take a few tries – most don’t marry the first person they date! At Eldercare Services we try to match client needs with caregiver skills on the first assignment – but sometimes personalities don’t compliment each other. It is quality of life we want and we will work with every family until we get it just right.

To request a comprehensive checklist on how to select home care, please email Info@EldercareAnswers.com or call us at (866) 760-1808.

Eldercare Services provides Counseling, Support Groups, Caregiving, 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.



ATTENTION!! Eldercare Answers is going green in 2011.

Over the next few months we will make the transition to e-newsletter only. To ensure you receive our newsletter, please send your email address to DanielleG@EldercareAnswers.com.



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Eldercare Services has offices in Marin, Oakland, San Francisco and Walnut Creek, CA. Visit us on the web at <http://www.EldercareAnswers.com> for more information.

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, (415) 469-8300 or email us at info@EldercareAnswers.com

Families Dealing with Dementia
Wednesday, August 18, 2010 from 6 PM to 8 PM
Living Options for Seniors
Friday, September 17, 2010 from 10 AM to Noon

Walnut Creek

Community Classes

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 Cheney St., San Francisco, CA 94131

Cost for Support Groups: None
Support Group Registration: Not required

Support Groups