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Newsletter

MARCH 2016

Memory Loss – Early Stage Interventions for Spouses, Adult Children & Friends

You notice a close family member or friend having more and more challenges with memory or making sound decisions. What do you do and how should you approach this sensitive subject? Recently I was asked to do a podcast interview with a Geriatrician. She asked me if there were any books for families dealing with this beginning stage of a dementia that brings on worry and concern. Sadly, my answer is that I could think of none that just addressed this issue.

When my mother first started to exhibit some lapses of judgment or memory I didn't want to confront it head on for two reasons: 1) I did not wish to see this fiercely independent woman (who was driving all over San Francisco with friends a decade younger than her) lose her independence. I needed her to be my strong role model even at 86. This is called denial. 2) My clinical background said I just needed to gather more information before jumping to conclusions. So, I started a log of times she forgot to take the keys out of her garage door as

she drove away, or repeated the same story to me five times, or going to see six different doctors with vague symptoms.

I had been providing my mother a personal assistant once a week since she was about 80 years-old. She just needed someone to help her with organizing paperwork and following up on the telephone for her when she had questions regarding a bill or an upcoming medical appointment because her hearing was impaired and phone calls were challenging. The personal assistant came for just 2 hours a week and was amazed at how well my mother was. She was my gatekeeper as mom's memory and judgment started to fail. Her dementia was from small strokes.

Not everyone has this type of information and monitoring of a parent at a distance or even nearby. Often those with dementia like Alzheimer's disease are socially appropriate for a long time into the illness, and even the family doctor might miss it on routine appointments. But, when you have the "red-



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 26 years.

MONTHLY AFFIRMATION: *"My love is endless my energy is limited."*

flags” that safety is at risk, it is time, or probably past time, to jump in. Start slowly, maybe with someone you ‘call’ a friend or a trainer, but they are really a paid caregiver from a reputable agency.

If you jump in and say, “Mom your memory is failing” you most likely will be faced with resistance and denial. How each of us approaches a parent can make all the difference in the success of the intervention. The best way to design a good plan is to bring in a third-party expert, Aging Life Care Manager™ (formerly called Care Managers), that will give you the most chance of success with your intervention. You might have a hard time with being entirely honest with a parent, but a professional care manager can help you to design

“therapeutic fiblets.” These are sometimes called “white lies” that are to be used to reduce stress for everyone and most of all protect the self-esteem of the person with the early stage dementia.

If an evaluation has not been done, the care manager will help you make that happen and connect you with the best dementia screening clinic in your area.

At Eldercare Services, we have classes and support groups for families dealing with the early stages of dementia – it is challenging to do this without some good advice and support. These classes are free and open to everyone – friends and family.

Upcoming Events

Caregiver Survival 101: Caring for Someone with a Dementia - Reducing Your Stress

WEDS. MARCH 23RD, 2016, 5:30PM - 7:00PM

Riding the roller coaster of dementia care? If the emotional ups and downs and the 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, mini-support groups, and resources for coaching and support

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

Caring for an Aging Family Member

2ND THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH

6:00PM - 7:30PM

Addressing the fears of Alzheimer’s disease & other issues associated with aging.

Anyone caring for another is welcome to this group. We focus on caring for you with suggestion to make the journey of care less stressful at the same time as finding solutions for challenges of delivering care.

** No fee and no registration required.*

Location of Events: Eldercare Services, 1808 Tice Valley Blvd., Walnut Creek, CA 94595

TO REGISTER Call: [866.760.1808](tel:866.760.1808) or Email: info@EldercareAnswers.com