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# Newsletter

AUGUST 2016

## California's New "End of Life Option" Act

When the days become numbered, and the pain or discomfort of illness is more than one can bear, Californians have a new law (End of Life Option Act) that allows those who meet the criteria, to take a drug that ends their life. I am sure this stirs up mixed feelings, values, and concerns for most of us. This can be especially hard to understand for those who fight hard against suicide or have experienced the death of a family member by suicide.

### TO QUALIFY, THE PATIENT MUST MEET THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA:

- Be a resident of California
- Be 18 years of age or older
- Have a diagnosis of an incurable disease that will result in death within six months
- The patient must be mentally competent and be able to make their own medical decisions
- The patient must be able to self-administer the drug

Oregon has had such a law for many years and even to this day only about 40% of the individuals that apply actually end their lives in this manner. In reality, 60% choose to allow the natural course of life to bring theirs to a close.

A complicating factor for physicians is that the American Medical Association's formal ethics policy is against doctors facilitating a patient's death; including offering information or drugs that enable the patient to perform this life-ending act. Doctors have the choice not to participate in a patient's decision to end their life, however, many will support those who choose this option.

Compassion & Choices is an organization that advocates for end of life options. They assist with education, consultation, policy promotion, and more. They have a hotline for Clinicians, which has more information for pharmacists and doctors to connect with resources and trained practitioners.



### 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:** *"I sleep well knowing I focus on the positives that contribute to wellness"*

Their hotline number is 1-800-893-4548 or check out their website –

[www.compassionandchoices.org/](http://www.compassionandchoices.org/)

Care, comfort, pain management, and supporting patients and families at the end of life are also the missions and goals of the hospice movement. In my experience, individuals and families often delay or decline the options that provide death with dignity. In part, such decisions are difficult because it means refusing aggressive treatments, thus facing end of life.

I made the hospice decision for my own mother; it was a tough choice signing the papers to enroll her.

However, this decision gave her the most peaceful and dignified end of life possible, in a home-like setting. Because of her dementia, she would not have had the choice of “the right to die” on her own. I know that I have had many clients in the past who would have also welcomed such a choice – as hard as it is.

The Professional Counseling staff and Care Management staff at Eldercare often meet with families looking for direction at challenging times. We are here to support you, with all of your tough decisions.

## Upcoming Events

### Brain Remodeling Class

WEDNESDAY AUGUST 31<sup>st</sup>, 2016, 5:30PM

A workshop to learn how to repair damage to your brain caused by stress. **You will learn:**

- How you can repair damage done by stress to your brain
- The power of “mindfulness”
- Simple ways to change your chromosomes

**It's never too late to be a better you**

*\*\*No fee but seating is limited.*

### Caregiver Survival 101: Caring for Someone with a Dementia

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016, 5:30PM

Are you riding the roller coaster of dementia care? If the emotional ups and downs are making your head spin, this class 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. Seating is limited and advance registration is required.*

### Caring for an Aging Family Member

2<sup>ND</sup> THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH, 6:00PM - 7:30PM

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

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

*\* No fee and no registration required.*

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### 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](mailto:info@EldercareAnswers.com)