

Inspiring Independence

**A Guide to Keeping your Loved Ones in their
Homes as They Age**

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Chapter 1

An Introduction to the Needs of Senior Citizens

People love independence in their lives. They like to make their own decisions and move about as they will. However, many people find it difficult to maintain this independence of decision-making and activity selection when they grow older. They cannot perform the routine functions that they used to do when they were young. It becomes more difficult for most people to take good care of themselves as they get older. This is the reason why elderly care is regarded as a high-demand field these days.

Elderly care is a broad term that includes a lot of topics such as providing assisted living, running nursing homes and taking care of seniors.

There are many institutions that cater to the needs of the elderly. These service centers include daycare centers and nursing care centers; sometimes hospitals also serve the elderly by providing terminal care.

Most senior citizens are quite fit due to modern medicine and improved standards of health care. As a consequence of a general decrease in human mortality rates, the number of senior citizens is increasing, as is the need for people to look after them.

There are many seniors who have a family but they love to live independently and make their own decisions, just like they have all of their lives. People in such circumstances usually have adult children who are living independently themselves. Seniors do not want to be a burden. However, their care is more important than their pride. They cannot be left alone to perform all of those daily tasks without help.

Many accidents happen when elderly people try to take care of themselves. Sometimes, they try to do everything the same way as they did when they were young. That leaves them prone to accidents and injuries. They want to do the chores, drive and eat their favorite foods, but these tasks are not that easy to perform when you are old. Tasks as mundane as taking care of the garden and vacuuming the floor become very difficult to perform in the later stages of your life.

Seniors usually find it very difficult to adjust mentally to their physical limitations. They usually try to perform activities and tasks in a manner similar to when they were young. Since they become weaker with age, they are simply not able to perform those same tasks. This means that we have to find a solution to take care of them in a suitable manner.

Elderly care is carried out in a number of ways. There are a lot of nursing homes in the United States that are able to take care of the elderly. There are also many organizations that take care of elderly who are suffering from a particular condition, mostly Alzheimer's disease. These specialized centers are only required when people are no longer able to support themselves due to their age.

Home care methods are becoming more popular because they allow people to live in their own surroundings. Companionship and housekeeping are required in these cases. People might also need help with transportation. All of these services can be obtained from a reputable home care service agency.

Let us now conduct an overview of what is considered elderly and what demographics make up the elderly population. The United Nations generally refer to the elderly as people who are over sixty years of age. The cutoff age of the elderly in United States is 65.

According to the U.S. Census, there are over 44 million people in the country who are elderly. They make up 14% of the total population, thus representing a large part of the community. It is estimated that this number will double by 2060. If it does, then seniors will require a lot more resources. The number of seniors has been on a constant rise, so it's important to take good care of them and help them remain functioning citizens of the country.



Chapter 2

Elderly Care is a Necessity

There is a lot of debate around the world about taking care of the elderly. One group of people believes that too many resources are employed in providing care for the elderly, who are the least productive demographic group of the society. Another group believes that, as humans, we are different from other species and are naturally inclined to take care of both elderly and infants. Both groups can be similarly termed as *unproductive*.

People, especially in the United States, love their independence. Most adults like to live in their homes, even if they are welcomed in the homes of their parents. This means that their parents can age up to a point where they cannot look after themselves. Then, the main issue is to decide the manner in which the best care can be arranged for them.

Most people change cities and neighborhoods when they grow older so that they can live closer to their job. This means that they get separated from their parents, making it difficult to take regular care of them by cooking or taking care of their grooming needs. Elderly people also find it difficult to move, so they come to live with their children.

The truth is that senior citizens can perform most of their everyday tasks. They are also sound enough to make their own decisions. The biggest problem for them is to find regular companionship. Research has shown that seniors have much healthier and more active lives when they are living with a partner. People who grow old without spouses are often found to be more distressed.

In most cases, seniors have just grown weak so they require a little bit of support. A family member is the best option to take care of them. However, there are cases where their family members are too busy to give a helping hand. Such cases require that they get help from either a home assistance organization or move into a nursing home.

Seniors are keen to live in their own homes. Preference should be given to home care, especially when seniors only have a few limitations and are not suffering from a serious disease which impairs their abilities. Home care offers just the right amount of support.

Companionship remains a key factor for many seniors. They find themselves better if they are provided regular companionship with someone who can do the heavy lifting for them. Therefore, we only need to provide them assistance in some areas where they are suffering from physical limitations.

Seniors who have regular access to companionship generally remain very active. It doesn't matter if that support is provided by a service or a family member. These people have a longer life span and generally do not suffer from conditions that ultimately lead to an untimely death.

Seniors cannot be left alone to take care of their own needs. They need regular assistance to ensure that they are doing well. They are also an important part of the community and their experience can go a long way in guiding the next generation. We need to take care of them, just like we take care of our children.

Our children are incapable of taking most decisions. They leave every decision for their elders to make, especially at a young age. The matter is entirely different when dealing with a senior citizen. They have a lot of experience and have been living in a particular manner for a long time. That makes it very difficult for them to suddenly change their ways and depend completely on others for their everyday tasks.

The best way to help them is to make sure that you're not disturbing their privacy. That leaves very few options to provide effective help to them. Good home care services are excellent in this regard and can work wonders in the lives of senior citizens.

It is important to show your loved ones that you care for both their wellbeing and their privacy. Ask them directly about their problems and then you can offer them help through a particular home service.



Chapter 3

Elderly Care Becomes Vital When They Live Alone

It is important to learn about the problems that seniors generally face when they are living alone. That's the only way you can effectively solve those problems. People generally face both physiological and mental problems at an older age.

They face many health issues that relate to the physiological decline that comes old age. The normal functioning of the body also slows down gradually, resulting in diminished functioning of the senses. This creates problems of poor vision and impaired mobility. Seniors also face digestive issues because of a change in their body's metabolism.

The elderly also face many mental health issues. This includes a general decline in memory. They also have a difficult time when trying to focus on something and cannot think clearly enough to make simple decisions. These problems are also combined with economic issues. Elderly are no longer able to work actively and have to rely on government support, pension funds or savings.

They might feel that their worth has decreased because they are no longer working actively. They may believe that they are not contributing to society. They start feeling as if they are not important to their families. They can often enter into a mental state where they find it difficult to come to terms with the new realities of life.

They become stressed if they do not get acquainted with their new social position and stature. That can lead to even more depression and stress in turn. This mental state creates more problems for them. In many cases, they become cranky. Some seniors become unfriendly during this state, so it becomes difficult to take care of them.

In this chapter, we're going to look at some common issues that seniors can face and how these issues can post a serious threat to their life if they are living alone or have a partner who is a senior citizen.

Acute Health Problems

There are many acute health problems that may be encountered by seniors. Such people are more prone to having *slip and fall* injuries. Such an injury can result in damage to a bone or ligament and it's extremely painful. Furthermore, it can be very difficult to get medical help if there is no one to take care of them.

Slip and fall accidents usually happen in bathrooms and on staircases. It is also very difficult for a person outside of the home to witness such an incident and help the person in time. A senior

who has had a fall often finds it extremely difficult to reach their phone and might even pass out due to the pain that is experienced due to the fall.

They are then at extreme risk, especially when living alone, because an injury can go unnoticed for an extended period of time, resulting in serious damage. Such an accident can even be fatal if the patient is left untreated or not taken to the hospital after a few hours have lapsed.

There are several similar scenarios that can also occur. People with a history of cardiac disease are always at risk of suffering from a heart attack. A heart attack can happen at any time, but it usually happens either early in the morning or late at night, when it's difficult to receive help if a person is living alone.

Some other risks that can be difficult to resolve include abrupt pains such as a severe migraine attack or appendicitis. Seniors need to understand the risks that they are taking while living alone and ensure that they have a mechanism in place to receive medical help, should such a need arise.

Cuts and bruises are also very common in the elderly because they have thinner skin. They must be vigilant and see a doctor immediately if they have suffered a cut or bruise when living alone.

Seniors can find themselves in severe trouble in such circumstances, so they need a strong support system just to survive these types of incidents. The best way to care for them is to take precautionary measures and ensure that your loved one is not alone while performing tasks which can have serious consequences in old age. Activities such as bathing and housekeeping can be dangerous to perform for seniors, so it's best to either perform such activities under supervision of a family member or to hire a healthy individual who is able to take care of them on a continuous basis.

Chronic Health Problems

There are many health issues that appear gradually in people as they age. The metabolism of seniors slows down, in turn, affecting and reducing their appetite. They usually get weak because they are not eating properly.

Normal health care methods can then become difficult to perform for the elderly. They will need help with tasks such as oral hygiene and bathing. Seniors also find it difficult to take care of their skin, which leaves them prone to having skin related diseases.

They also suffer from restlessness. Sleeping problems are very common in old age and require medication, as well as engagement of the body in different activities to ensure that it performs the sleeping cycle in a natural manner.

Arthritis is another common disease which is contracted at an old age. It weakens the bones of the body, making the individual extremely vulnerable to having damaged bones and ligaments. They can get injured from the slightest of accidents. Most seniors also develop hypertension and have high cholesterol levels. Such individuals can then become overweight, making it extremely difficult for them to live their daily lives in an ordinary manner.

Obesity is a serious issue in the United States, even for old people. They lose mobility due to obesity, which leads to other serious complications such as reducing their activities and making them prone to accidents.

An asthma attack can often be controlled with an inhaler, but if a senior citizen is unable to reach the inhaler in time, a simple asthma attack can close the passage of air. People with known allergies are also prone to suffering from serious conditions if they are somehow exposed to their allergens.

Chronic conditions can also include diabetes, which can create many complications in seniors. Senior citizens need to take good care of themselves and take their medication on a regular basis. They might forget to take their medications due to age, which puts them at additional risk while they are living alone. They can even have a severe attack due to having a very high or very low blood sugar.

Difference of Care when the Elderly are Alone or with a Family Member

There is a lot of difference in the standard of care when a senior is living with a family member. A family member can be a life-saver in terms of the many acute conditions that we have described above. Immediate medical care is required in most of these cases and a family member is able to call professional help when needed.

Seniors also neglect their care and don't take care of themselves with the vigilance that is required due to their age. A family member can take better care of a senior person and ensure that important elements such as oral hygiene and personal grooming are being taken care of on a regular basis.

The quality of activities also changes with the help of a family member. A senior might not be able to take a bath properly or sit properly in a car in an ideal position. The help of a someone in this regard can make a huge difference and allow a senior citizen to live life in a more active manner. That makes it good for both their physical health and their mental wellbeing.

The most important thing to remember is that our elders require companionship. According to numerous studies, they feel a lot better when able to speak with people about their lives. They perform better in all of their daily tasks if they are just given the extra attention that is required.

Chapter 4

Effectively Helping Seniors

As a person ages, they pass through a lot of phases in life. Retirement represents a beginning for renewing interest in hobbies and enjoying life with their grandchildren. Some people absolutely love owning a pet. These are just some of the activities that a senior citizen might take up as they get older.

The senior citizen population continues to grow in many parts of the country, especially in states such as Massachusetts. This means that everyone can benefit from learning about seniors and their unique needs. Seniors have spent their lives giving something to the community so it is now their time to receive the same back from the community.

It's important to raise awareness in the community about the help seniors need. Businesses must add structures and entrances that make it easier on elderly people when they visit them. Individuals also have to be vigilant around the elderly and ask them if they require help. It can definitely provide the support that most seniors require to keep their lives on track by still living independently.

If you have an elderly person in your family, you need to try your best to devote some of your time to them. Visit them in a consistent manner. Help them with tasks that they find difficult to perform. With that said, you have to show them that you do not intend to interfere with their privacy and that you are just helping them out.

There are certain activities in particular that the elderly need help with – gardening or taking care of their pet are two primary examples. You can also help them with seasonal tasks, like clearing snow during the winter season. You can also help them take care of themselves by cooking healthy food for them. The possibilities are endless!

Senior citizens also find it difficult to arrange their activities and important assets in a proper manner. You can help them create a schedule for taking their medications and mark those medicines in an efficient manner so that it's easier for them to remember to take those medications.

You can also raise awareness in the community about the rights and issues of senior citizens. They can receive better living conditions if there is an increase in concern about their welfare. They need better support when they are performing their routine activities.

If you are a student, you can become part of a social program to take care of seniors. You will learn a lot of techniques and important care tips that you can then use in taking care of your

own elders. You can also live with your grandparents if it is convenient for both parties and take care of them in a personal manner.

Things to Consider When Caring for Senior Citizens

There are a few things that you must learn if you intend to take care of senior citizens. Whether they are your own relatives or belong to the community, you can use these guiding principles in multiple environments to prepare yourself better to take care of any individual. Here are the important concepts of senior care:

- The most important element that is required when taking care of the elderly is to have patience. Patience is a great virtue in this regard. Senior citizens find it difficult to understand certain things so you have to remain patient in order to help them.
- You have to be practical with your elders. You cannot ask them to do things that are too difficult for them. Understand the financial restraints that often limit the amount of professional care that a person can afford and plan caring activities accordingly.
- Minimize the amount of change around them. Seniors find it difficult to come to terms with change. They are used to performing tasks in a certain manner for a number of years. They find it mentally difficult to cope with drastic changes in their environment.
- Understand that your elders might require professional help. There are times when it is impossible to take care of your loved ones by yourself. You either do not have the time or simply find it straining your own life.



Chapter 5

Services Required by the Elderly

There are many services that are required by the elderly. Senior citizens might aim to perform some of these activities and fail to do them properly. If you are looking to help an elderly member of your family, then you need to understand the problems that they might face.

We are going to describe some of the services that are required by seniors. There are many organizations and social care institutions that are trying to cater to the needs of these seniors including companionship, transportation services and housekeeping. These are services that are typically required on a regular basis.

A senior might find life very easy if they have been provided proper help in taking care of themselves and their living spaces. Most of the time, seniors are able to take care of themselves in an effective manner as long as they get some help with common chores that they have to perform on a daily basis.

We have described some of the activities that the elderly might require help in performing. This help can either come from a family member or a professional service. There are many activities which can be better delivered by a professional due to their complex nature since they require some prior experience and more skill.



Companionship

The most common requirement of a senior is to get regular companionship. Seniors are usually free so they have a lot of time to think. They want to express themselves and are in dire need for companionship.

Seniors generally need companions who are able to understand their ideas and talk to them about the topics in which they are interested. Senior citizens are usually very interested in their hobbies and love to talk about them with other people.

A popular home service that many seniors require is companionship. Good organizations have excellent caretakers who provide seniors with friendly company. They are intelligent individuals capable of “*small talk*” with your elders. They represent the best option because they take care of the mental needs of seniors.

Good companions are able to hear the thoughts of senior citizens and talk to them accordingly. They are able to share a friendly bond with seniors who might enjoy their company so much that they eventually develop a personal bond with their companion.

These companions can also work efficiently as work assistants. They can help seniors with their regular needs and provide assistance as needed. They can also assist in transporting them to the market to buy whatever they require for their day-to-day activities.

Companions can perform tasks that are mostly associated with family members. They act as family members and can play games with your elders. They can help them pass their time by reading books or accompanying them during their leisurely activities such as walking in the park or gardening. These companions are basically a mix of personal assistants and caretakers.

The companions that belong to good organizations are often trained to take care of the important needs of elderlies. They can take care of needs like basic cleaning of the house and checking the mail.

Benefits of Companionship

Companionship offers many benefits to senior citizens. They are able to regularly communicate with others; therefore, they remain alert and knowledgeable. They are able to perform cognitive functions on a regular basis, keeping their minds alert and saving them from problems which are usually associated with old age.

Another useful benefit of having a regular companion is the retention of social skills. Seniors are able to socialize with their companion, which allows them to practice social skills such as talking about different concepts and understanding the point of view of others. Companionship can also increase the mobility of individuals who are older.

Seniors face difficulties in performing certain activities alone and feel a lot more comfortable if they believe that they are with someone who will be able to take care of them should a problem arise. This increases their mobility. In the long run, it's good for their health since they are able to get regular exercise by engaging in different physical activities.

Another very important benefit with companionship services is that you can be sure about the care of your older relative. Most companions, as long as they belong to a reputable company, are trained nurses and able to take care of your elders if a medical emergency occurs. This is very important because if you took care of an elder by yourself, you would still not be able to take care of certain medical emergencies.

Older people enjoy companion services greatly because it improves both their physical and mental abilities. These services also allow them to remain healthy by keeping an active schedule with the help of their companion. Research shows that people who are able to enjoy regular social contact in old age suffer less from certain mental issues.

A recent study shows that people can live longer and healthier lives if their social needs are well-met and they are able to regularly exercise their social skills. Physicians are unable to resolve mental issues of older patients when they are caused by isolation. Seniors can face difficult mental challenges if they are left alone and not provided regular social contact in some form.

Seniors are limited by many factors, such as having limited mobility and finances. Good home care can work for them if they are able to regain contact with society and are interacting with different social elements around them. Companions for the elderly can truly serve them for many needs.

Meal Preparation

Elderly people often get ill because they are not able to take care of their nutritional requirements. They usually suffer from malnutrition, despite having the money to afford good food. This happens due to the fact that they are not able to regularly cook for themselves and often turn towards a quicker solution that may not be good for their health.

Another common problem with old age is the loss of appetite. Seniors don't get much physical exercise either. Both these factors cause them to miss their nutritional targets. Seniors require food that is rich in vitamins and proteins in order to provide replenishment to their body and keep it in a better condition for a longer period of time.

Elderly who generally live in isolation often forget to eat meals at a proper time. They can become very weak as well. The solution to all of these problems is to prepare meals for them regularly and then ensure that they are eating their meals on time.

You can take care of your elders by preparing meals regularly for them. However, many people are so busy that it is difficult to find the time to cook for a loved one. You can choose to hire a good home care service company to take care of your loved one and provide them with regular meals.

All good elderly care companies provide services that include preparing homemade meals and feeding assistance in the same package. Most senior citizens miss their regular meals because they feel lonely at meal times. They are not accustomed to eating alone. They know that their loved ones have a busy schedule, so they don't want to bother them by asking to share a meal.

Home care experts are outstanding in this regard. They can prepare nutritious food at home and also provide the companionship that they require during meals. Seniors feel more secure if they are able to talk to someone during their meals. Sometimes, your elder might suffer from a physical or emotional issue. In that case, a home care expert would be an ideal choice to take care of their nutritional needs.

Home care service experts are able to draw up a complete nutritional plan for your loved one while also ensuring that they offer meals that provide variety. Such experts are able to cover all of the nutritional requirements of your loved ones. They can also plan a food preparation schedule that provides good nutrition and takes care of the health of senior citizens.

Advantages of Meal Preparation

There are many distinct advantages that appear as a result of having access to meal preparation and feeding services. It's important to understand that the best care for seniors can only be taken when they are cared for in an environment that they are familiar with. Seniors often have a weak memory so it is difficult for them to prosper in an uncertain environment, such as a nursing home.

Meal preparation also allows seniors to work closely with a dietitian to prepare a meal schedule that provides them with all the necessary nutrients needed for good health. It allows caretakers, such as the children of older parents, to definitively know what they have been eating in their daily routine. They can then communicate this to doctors as well. Elders often forget what they eat.

However, meal preparation has many advantages that can become void if a senior person refuses to eat the prepared food. Ensuring that they eat the food is also an important element. It is not essential to spoon feed most of them. They are fond of having company at meal times, which makes them eager to eat their food. Trained caretakers can provide them with this important companionship that can turn their meal time into pleasurable exchanges where they can have a proper conversation with their caretakers.

Sometimes, adverse effects may surface due to eating a particular meal. This is because seniors can develop allergies or fail to mention an old allergy to a person who is preparing the food for them. In this case, a trained professional is perhaps the best option. They can take good care of seniors, even if an allergic reaction occurs due to a certain food. They can also explain it better to a doctor in case of an emergency.

Good homecare services might seem to add some costs when taking care of your elders, but most elderly insurance plans are able to cover these costs. There are also many companies that offer services at quite modest rates. It is important to hire caretakers from a reputed company because meal preparation plays an important part in taking care of the health of a senior.

Housekeeping Services

Your loved ones can find it very difficult to take care of their homes when they get older. Certain tasks that might be classified as easy (dishes, dusting) are time-consuming and straining for seniors. They need help taking care of their wardrobe and bathroom needs, especially while having a bath. Some people might also have a garden or front porch as well which can really lose its purpose if there is no one to take care of it.

There are many home care services that put focus on providing light housekeeping services. They are not housekeeping companies, so their main aim is not to provide overall cleaning for the home. Rather, their focus is on providing your loved one with a clean and carefree environment so that they are away from any health hazards.

Light housekeeping focuses on cleaning parts of the house that especially affect the individual. Caretakers belonging to good home care services are able to clean kitchen surfaces, as well as the bathroom after using it to groom your loved one. These caregivers can also take care of expensive plants that require watering.

This type of housekeeping allows the senior to live in their homes without any fear of facing problems they cannot handle. Good caregivers always provide housekeeping services such as taking care of the kitchen, bathroom and the bedroom of your loved one.

Advantages of Housekeeping Services

A clean home is vital for maintaining both the mental and physical health of its occupants. Our elders are not able to take care of their home due to the weaknesses that come with aging. They do like to keep it clean though. Some help in this regard can truly work wonders and also entice your elders to take care of the rest of the house.

Light housekeeping can create a clean environment. This creates the feeling of having things close to them organized. Structure and organization of the home are known to have a soothing effect on everyone, including seniors.

Such services also take the stress off your loved ones. For example, they won't have to worry about how they will clean the bathroom if they decide to take a bath. They are more likely to fix themselves a snack if they are sure that the kitchen will be cleaned by the end of the day.

They can also keep a few plants around to create an ambient atmosphere. Plants improve the aesthetic value of the living place and provide positive emotions to people around them. Light housekeeping services will ensure that these plants are watered appropriately.

Basic housekeeping can become a very important service to be included with other homecare elements. All of them are usually required to take care of your loved ones in their own homes. This might allow you to perform the detailed housekeeping by yourself on weekends too. Your work in taking care of your elders is reduced. You can use the same time for a more productive task, such as spending some time talking to your loved ones.

Bathing and Grooming Services

The main desire of seniors is to live their life the same way that they always have. The problem is that old age restricts them from performing some of the same activities they did when they were younger. Homecare professionals can help in performing the same activities by providing them with the little push that they often require.

Bathing is an important activity for living a healthy and hygienic life. The elderly find it difficult to arrange their clothes, take a shower and clean their bodies. Homecare professionals can help them with these tasks. They can provide assistance with all of their bathing and grooming needs.

Some of the activities that homecare professionals can help with include shaving and brushing the hair of seniors. Furthermore, many seniors find it difficult to change their clothes due to weaknesses and/or partial disabilities that are due to old age. Grooming produces a positive feeling in elders since they feel that they can take better care of themselves.

Personal care is able to really improve the life experience of seniors. Some of them also suffer from incontinence problems so they really need help in visiting the bathroom. They feel a lot better if they are able to use the bathroom in a consistent manner.

The physical health of seniors who can still perform bathing and grooming activities remains a lot better. They are better protected against seasonal diseases and also stay away from problems such as ticks and lice that might become severe if a bath is not taken for long periods of time.

Advantages of Bathing and Grooming Services

Bathing and grooming services are perhaps the most important in taking good care of the elderly. Without these services, they will be exposed to many diseases. This is one area where seniors are a bit reluctant to get help because they feel ashamed. However, these issues must be taken care of.

The important thing is to not to force them to have a bath or get a haircut. You have to prepare them to for these activities. A homecare service professional is trained to perform these tasks and it is easier for these professionals to persuade your loved ones to take care of themselves with their help.

Seniors feel fresh after taking a bath and grooming. It is important that they enjoy these activities on a weekly basis. This creates a schedule for them. Having a schedule is important because they find it easier to perform activities that are habitual for them.

Good bathing services can be provided by asking loved ones to give you their preferences regarding these activities. You can find it difficult to give a bath to your elders because of no prior experience and training. Professionals are able to carry out these activities as a matter of routine and can also clean up the bathroom after use.

This is important because it creates a feeling of importance in your loved ones. They feel that you are serious about taking care of them and they try to help the service professionals as much as they can. This improves their physical and mental health. In fact, it can also provide them with ample exercise as well, which is quite important for their well-being.

Mobility Assistance Services

Seniors sometimes suffer from disabilities or temporary health issues that hamper their mobility in a number of ways. As a result, their physical activities get reduced and they start to lose their social skills. Mobility assistance to such elders can truly bring their life back and provide them the support that they require to carry out routine activities.

A lot of the time, it's not possible to remain consistent with your loved ones and take them out every day. The best way to help your loved ones is to arrange mobility assistance services for them. There are professional workers who are able to provide excellent assistance to seniors. These workers can assist them in a wheelchair and can help them get into and out of a car.

Mobility is very important for elderly care. Seniors who lose their mobility are prone to mental health problems. When they find it difficult to move around, they become silent and stop interacting with the world around them. This is a recipe for disaster because they start to develop symptoms of depression and their overall health deteriorates rapidly.

Mobility assistance is very important, especially for those who require a wheelchair to move around. Good homecare professionals are able to shift elderly people in vehicles while also moving them around the house as required. Professionals can also help them travel in a special car or take them to their doctor's appointments.

Mobility assistance professionals can also help elderly people in changing clothes. This is an important service because most seniors do not want to go out because they feel that they are not appropriately dressed. They can feel positive about themselves with a little bit of help. This assistance is provided by helping them carry out their activities in the usual manner.

Benefits of Mobility Assistance Services

Mobility assistance is extremely important because it improves the confidence of seniors who are suffering from a physical disability. It gives them the confidence that they can still perform their routine activities. They can move around with assistance services and still feel that they are part of the community.

There are times when you cannot take your loved ones out, so mobility assistance services can help you out in such cases and allow you to work in peace knowing that a professional is taking good care of your relatives.

Mobility assistance services simply allow your elders to resume their activities with required assistance. This assistance elevates the level of confidence that a person has in his or her abilities. Seniors can still work in some capacities. If they can find good mobility assistance, they are able to renew their lives and move about the community in the same way they could when they were younger.

Transportation Services

Many seniors are not able to drive anymore. Some of them might not be able to do so because of a disability. You can try to provide them the required transportation services, but it often becomes difficult to find the time to take your elders everywhere because of your own busy schedule. Sometimes, they have special needs while travelling which makes it even more difficult for a relative to serve them in a consistent manner.

Most homecare service companies focus on providing transportation services to their clients. These transportation services often include a supporting package as well because seniors have to run small errands when they are out.

Seniors usually have small errands to run, such as picking up some vegetables from the local market or filling a prescription. A professional service provider is able to help them with such needs and can also provide them transportation. This transportation comes with the assistance that they require during traveling.

Good transportation services can ensure that seniors can still use their abilities and social skills in an open environment. You can also be sure that your loved ones are moving about in a safe environment when you have hired professional transportation services for them. It is essential that the elderly have a service that they can depend on to carry out their routine activities. Some of these activities can only be completed with proper transportation and support.

Improvements Made by Transportation Services

Good transportation services can provide a lot of benefits and certainly improve the physical and mental conditions of seniors. They are able to enjoy the company of the individual who is driving them to a destination. It is important to only rely on transportation services from a reputable company because they have professionals able to take good care of your loved ones.

There can be a lot of improvement in the condition of your loved ones if they are able to regularly visit different places. These types of activities allow them to follow the same schedule that they always had when they could move without assistance. It promotes positive feelings in them and they will feel so much better since they can enjoy some outdoor hobbies and recreational activities too.

You must support them with these transportation services, especially if you cannot regularly take them out for daily activities or their essential needs. Seniors might find transportation support just the ingredient needed to entice them to pursue new hobbies and regularly practice their social skills and make new friends.

Respite Services and Their Importance

Sometimes, all you need is momentary relief from taking care of your loved ones. You might take care of them on a regular basis, but suddenly face problems and assignments that can temporarily stop you from being able to take care of them. Respite services are extremely useful during these times. These services give you a respite.

There are many excellent homecare service companies that offer high quality respite services. You need to make sure that their caretakers are trained to take good care of your elders. Good companies have professionals who have undertaken special trainings to perform these tasks with the utmost professionalism.

You have to ensure that you are getting excellent caregivers for your loved ones. You can always do some research when looking to obtain respite services. A good respite service will allow you to take care of your life without having to worry about your loved one. You can enjoy a holiday or carry out a business meeting with complete satisfaction if you know that someone is taking good care of your loved ones.

In fact, respite services are extremely important for you. If you are trying to juggle the care of your relatives with your professional (or personal) needs, then you might need a break. Taking care of a senior can be a very tough job in all its merits. Respite services provide you with the break you so desperately need.

You need to give yourself some personal time as well. You might require time to just freshen up and go for an entertainment activity just to get a break. This is an excellent way to take time off. Respite is provided mostly by highly effective care workers.

Respite care can also turn out good for your loved ones as well. It provides them a different person with whom they may share parts of their life that they will never share with you. Respite care provides you with a day off that you might desperately need. There is no shame in looking for respite when performing elderly care.

Elderly care is a difficult, yet important task. You can get the help of a reputable homecare agency that will provide you the necessary vacation from your usual tasks of taking care of the needs of your loved ones. You can use these services to take a day off and feel extremely fresh because of a change in your schedule.

Respite services are also great in the case of sudden changes to your plan or in the plan of your elders. These services provide you the luxury to carry out your activities according to their immediate requirements. The costs of these services are sometimes covered by insurance, but even if you have to pay for them, they are well-worth the cost. You can get a much needed break and your loved one can have the wonderful experience of having a different person to talk to for a bit. You can also realize that your elders have developed some other health issues.

Respite services are provided by well-trained professionals and they might be able to assess the condition of your loved one better due to their knowledge and previous experience.



Chapter 6

Care Options for Senior Citizens

There are many options for seniors to decide how they want to age, especially in the United States. Different options have advantages and shortcomings. A good decision is the one that is taken according to the requirements of an individual person.

We're going to discuss some of these options in detail. This knowledge will allow both seniors and their beloved caretakers to make better decisions. The ultimate aim of using any service is to ensure that the best care available is being provided. It is also important that an individual is not forced into a decision. They should be allowed to select what they believe to be the best option.

Here are some of the options available to seniors.

Assisted Living

Assisted living is a common option in the United States. It's great for people who have a few disabilities. These people are usually able to take good care of themselves, but find it difficult to perform certain tasks because of a particular disability or physical handicap. Assisted living facilities are housing facilities which are serviced by healthcare professionals.

Residents living in these homes are constantly monitored so that their safety can be ensured. Professional help is always available should a person require any assistance. Assisted living is a more modern concept that has become common in the last two decades. It provides care options for individuals who are looking for some help, but are not completely dependent on others to do their work.

There are many healthy seniors in the country who have a specific problem that keeps them from performing certain tasks. Assisted living provides them the option of having the freedom to do most of their tasks while also providing them the security to know that they're able to call for help when needed. Therefore, it presents a concept that is created by combining their care with the independence they so desperately crave.

Seniors who value their dignity above everything else choose this option. This is also the option taken by those who are still relatively young and healthy, but have no one to provide help if they choose to live alone.

There are also assisted living centers that cater to the needs of people suffering from a particular condition. There are many centers that service patients suffering from dementia or have the Alzheimer's disease.

There are also some problems that are associated with centers that provide assisted living. One problem is the lack of standardization, which makes it very difficult to differentiate the performance and services of one center from another. There have been instances where only one medical professional was employed by such centers to take care of numerous seniors with special needs. These centers are often run by profit organizations, so it becomes difficult to select the right one.

Adult Daycare Center

A daycare center is named so because it is a non-residential facility. That means that people are not allowed to permanently live in a day care center. It works in the same manner as a day care center for young children. It's a place where adults can spend time in a group setting and provides an excellent place for carrying out short-term rehabilitation.

Most adult daycare centers work by providing seniors with a chance to put their social skills to use. They ensure that people attending them have a good set of activities to perform and are supervised in a very gentle manner.

These centers are based on a social model which is designed to provide for the social needs that most adults miss when they are alone at their homes. Some centers also function to provide for certain special medical needs.

These centers cater to rehabilitation services and skill assessment. These medical activities based centers are generally good for people who have just recovered from mental illnesses and are looking for a gradual integration into the mainstream community.

There are a lot of day care centers that are designed specifically for patients suffering from chronic illnesses, like having a weak memory. Some centers specialize in taking care of people that have physical disabilities. Finally, most day care centers have a well-furnished medical emergency room, giving them the ability to provide emergency medical care to patients if necessary.

These centers can be categorized as something between assisted living and long-term care. They regularly engage their patients in daily social and physical activities to ensure that the cognitive function of their patients is developed.

Day care centers also provide expert respite care. There are many people who want to take care of their loved ones by themselves, but they have trouble keeping up with their busy schedule. Sometimes they might even have to go to out of town for a few hours. These centers free up normal caregivers so that they can take care of certain tasks in their lives.

Long Term Care

Long term care services are required for seniors who are suffering from chronic illnesses. These medical conditions are persistent and require constant medical attention. These care centers are also for those with a serious disability that forces them to rely on others during a particular function.

Long term care centers usually take on the custody of elderly patients that they receive. They have to take care of the medical and common needs of the patients that they serve on a constant basis. Medical practitioners are always present at such centers because they usually house patients with serious illnesses.

Long term care represents a concept that can be implemented at either home or in a center that provides assisted living. Long term care depends on the availability of trained professionals who are able to assist the elderly in performing their daily tasks. These centers also help with patients' medical conditions.

Long term care is usually required because of a special condition or disability. It is not limited to only senior patients. It is common for seniors to suffer from serious conditions and require support in a persistent manner. It's a concept that has been associated with the care of senior citizens.

Nursing Home Care

A nursing home is a special facility that provides complete residential care for patients. It is usually selected as the place of residence for senior citizens who do not want to live alone in their homes. As the name suggests, a nursing home has twenty-four hour access to trained staff which is able to take care of any patient – including those with a medical condition.

These facilities are often termed as Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNF). They are also used for taking intermediate care of seniors. This means that they provide a residence for patients who are fit enough to move out of a hospital, but still require support from medical staff and are finding it tough to survive on their own.

Again, a nursing home is not limited to older patients. They can also have younger patients that are suffering from serious medical conditions. The main function of a nursing home is to house all kinds of rehabilitation services. It needs to work as a service center for patients who can then move out to live on their own.

Different nursing homes are also used for particular needs. People living in nursing homes can also ask for many legal rights under state and federal law. There are a lot of cases that usually surface about the medical care provided in nursing homes.

Hospice Care

Hospice care is the name given to the care of patients who are terminally ill. This care is often provided at registered hospitals. Its main goal is to manage the symptoms and conditions of people who are diagnosed with terminal illnesses. The concept of hospice care is quite old and people used to take care of their chronically ill relatives in a number of ways as well.

Many elders these days ask that hospice care be provided to them in their own homes. They feel that they can remain more comfortable if they are living in a well-known surrounding. That means that hospice care can occur at the patient's home or a special medical facility such as a nursing home.

The Medicare system allows patients in the United States to enjoy hospice care in their homes. That same level of service is not common in most of Europe and Asia. Hospice care in other parts of the world refers especially to the care taken in hospitals and nursing homes during the last year of a terminally ill patient.



Chapter 7

Living in a Nursing Home

Nursing homes are especially designed to provide care for seniors who are suffering from serious medical and social problems. People are responsible for taking care of their elders, especially after they have lost the cognitive ability to make conscious decisions.

Many people believe that the best solution is to find a caring center for their parents. They seriously believe that they cannot take care of their parents. The best option in this regard is to select a caring organization that has access to good facilities.

One concept that describes the problems appearing in these centers is that we are trying to cure diseases that can end life prematurely while also improving the quality of life of our loved ones during their twilight years.

Most nursing home residents are people who have frail health. They are residing in a place which there is already a crisis that even the federal government has recognized over the previous years. The demand for these centers is increasing because the number of our senior citizens is rising rapidly. That has created a high demand for nursing homes.

The main challenge faced by nursing homes is to deliver quality care to their residents. The funding of these homes is already under question and now they have to run it by using a business model that is required to make profits or at least balance their books. This results in cost reductions that are leading to poor standards for the employed staff.

Nursing homes need to understand that most of the time when they receive their patients, the situation is out of the control of the caretakers of the senior. They either come to a home from a hospital or have to be taken due to a serious issue. They need to actively take steps to satisfy the caretakers and ensure that they are able to provide the same quality of care as expected by concerned family members.

Possible Improvements

The main goal of any center should be to add meaning to the lives of seniors who are residing inside their walls. Nursing homes currently focus on health and safety. These are essential concepts, but they also need to practice ingenuity and provide freedom to their residents by understanding their social requirements. They can't stop there either. Nursing homes have to address those requirements.

People are now selecting nursing homes that respect the choices of the elderly and arrange their objectives according to the individual needs of residents. Small steps can work wonders in

this case. If a senior is confined to a wheel chair due to a sudden accident, he/she can be best consoled by the prospect of being able to walk after a certain amount of time. A staff member asking a patient if he/she wants to walk a few steps with a walker or a stick will do wonders to their self-confidence.

We have to change our thinking when making decisions about the best care for our elders. We also have to respect their choices and give those choices the same priority as we give to their medical care and safety conditions. This means that we have to focus on their quality of life as much as we do their quantity of life.

Seniors usually feel happy at nursing centers that do not impose special conditions on them, such as having a roommate. People like to keep to themselves, especially in the later stages of life because they are usually suffering from many medical issues that they do not like to become highlighted in front of unknown people.

The solution to most of these problems is the proper implementation of hospice care to these residential care centers. The emphasis should be on improving the quality of life of the elderly, which will naturally improve their mental condition. The results will be an improvement in the overall condition of your loved one.

Counseling has a lot of advantages for these individuals. They should be provided counseling sessions where they are able to better communicate about their living space. These counseling sessions can also be arranged in a group setting, which will increase social interaction of seniors among their resident companions.

All nursing homes can be made better if they incorporate steps that allow seniors to feel comfortable. The focus of nursing homes should be taking care of people in such a manner as to also win their satisfaction. The comfort of seniors is important because they are at an age where personal discomfort can directly affect their medical condition.

Good Nursing Homes

There are a lot of nursing homes that are functioning according to our described standards. These nursing homes take care of the elderly in the way they are supposed to by putting more importance to the quality of life that these people require.

There are many steps that nursing homes can take in order to ensure that they are taking the best care of their patients. This is done by providing seniors with different options of socialization and taking great care of their health while they are there. They should also provide a variety of activities.

We are going to list a few qualities that can be embraced by any nursing home to ensure that its occupants are happy and content while living there. This presents a great opportunity for individuals who do not have the time to take care of their loved ones.

Showing Respect

Respect is an important virtue, especially in regard to seniors. All staff members of a nursing home need to clearly show that they respect the individuals who are residing at the care center. The staff can respect them by listening to their needs and politely responding to their requests.

Different Social Activities

There should be different social activities that need to be arranged at different care centers. Seniors have the same difference in choices as we have; therefore, it's important to host a number of activities to involve all the individuals who are staying at a nursing home. These activities can range from a game of cards to holding book readings and movie sessions.

The important thing is to include the elderly in a natural manner where they don't feel that they are being forced into an activity. These activities need to remain voluntary while being designed in a specific manner to cover the social needs of everyone involved.

Comfortable Sitting Places

Nursing homes contain a common area where all occupants can interact with each other and their visitors. This area needs to be as comfortable as possible. Many seniors can close themselves off if they are not comfortable in sitting in these areas. They should offer support to individuals that require the use of wheelchair as well.

Extra Services

Nursing homes can be much more than places where people live due to a disability. Good nursing homes realize this fact and many offer grooming and spa services to their residents. They can also include standardized gym services, as well as yoga classes to garner more attention from their elderly residents. These services will ensure that residents are happy and are enjoying their time. This will improve their mental health.

Tasty Food

Many nursing homes can lose their focus on this point. They put so much emphasis on providing healthy food to their residents that they forget that taste is also an important factor. Healthy food does not necessarily have to taste bad. Nursing centers can easily ensure that the food that they are providing to residents is not only healthy, but also tasty enough to entice anyone into eating it.

Welcoming Visitors

Most seniors get cranky when they are taken away from their normal routines. The frequent visit of a familiar person, such as children and grandchildren, can ease the anxiety they face due to joining a nursing home.

A nursing home needs to understand this need and cater especially to such patients by providing them ample opportunities to meet with their friends and family members. The greater social interaction with others can only do well for the elderly and help them recover better from both physical and mental health problems.



Chapter 8

Improving Home Conditions for the Elderly

There are many home improvements that can be used to modify the home of an elderly relative to better suit their specific needs. These home improvements are designed to help them maintain their independence. There are many cases where home improvements can allow a senior to remain independent in performing their daily routines.

There is a science that describes elder care called *geriatrics*. Geriatrics refers to the medical care for senior citizens. It is important for everyone to learn some basic principles of geriatrics so they can take better care of their beloved ones as they grow older. First, we will present an overview of this branch of medical science to help you understand how steps like home care are able to improve the conditions of our elders.

Understanding Geriatrics

The focus of geriatrics is entirely different from conventional medicine. The needs of an older body are not the same as the needs of a younger body. For example, a senior responds differently to medication than an individual. Geriatricians understand that they are dealing with patients that have a weak body and different social needs.

Therefore, the study focuses on taking care of people who might already have many symptoms that can either point to a disease or simply be the result of a weak organ system. A geriatrician is trained to understand the difference between the normal conditions of an elderly person and symptoms that point towards a particular disease.

The quality of life is quite important to geriatricians. They advise medical care for their patients in a way that provides them with the best quality. This means that seniors may require help if they are diagnosed with a particular condition. Living alone and remaining independent might not always be the right option.

It's best to consult a geriatrician when taking important decisions about seniors. These decisions usually involve deciding about the methods that are to be employed to address the long term care needs of seniors. The advice of a geriatrician should be taken seriously since they have the knowledge of the latest options for elderly care and have the experience to select the best method for your loved one.

Home Improvements

Some home improvements that can help the elderly are very simple. You can take care of some of these improvements yourself when you get a free weekend. These changes can be as simple

as putting easy-to-use handles on doors. However, improvements can also include complex ideas such as installing an electric stair chair that runs on a rail.

These changes are designed to work on two basic fronts. The first one is to provide modifications that enable seniors to retain their independence. The second group of changes focuses on home improvements that provide safety and good home care for your loved ones. Most changes can offer both advantages.

An electric chair lift allows seniors to move independently, but also eliminates the risk of accidents that are quite common while climbing stairs. Other changes can also be made that offer both advantages, such as installing electric switch boards at a lower height and having an eating table which is adjusted for the height of a person who might be using a wheelchair.

Home Automation

The automation industry has recognized the care of seniors as a goal that can be achieved through good home automation techniques. People love to remain independent and continue to live in their own homes when they have grown older. However, seniors who suffer from disabilities can face problems in performing many tasks – many of which they used to do easily when they were younger.

Home automation employs technology that is already in use. Some of this technology comes from entertainment, energy conservation and security. These solutions are converted and geared towards helping provide seniors with mechanical support in performing activities that have become difficult for them due to old age.

The first type of home automation system is based on using embedded health support in the home. These systems use pre-installed sensors in home appliances, furniture and other household items to help individuals use them in a variety of ways. A central system can collect data from all sensors and take the necessary steps for identifying and helping the needs of an individual.

Second, we have a home automation system that utilizes the concept of a private health network. It uses portable devices that can collect important medical data and maintain this data. These systems can generate the data necessary to diagnose complex diseases and can also be used to discover if the individual is getting exposed to a particular health hazard.

Advantages of Home Automation

Home automation is quickly growing in popularity. Many seniors are staying away from being admitted into nursing homes and opting to install home modifications that allow them to

remain independent for a longer time. These modifications are improving the safety of the homes in which seniors are residing.

The main advantage of home automation solutions is the fact that seniors can decide to live where they are happy and more content. It's difficult for most seniors to adjust to the environment of a care center. Automation provides them with facilities for their need that might have otherwise forced them to move into a care center in the past.

With that said, there is a concern attached with most automation applications. There's a fear among seniors that if they opt for more automation, then their human interactions would be reduced. Interaction with other people is extremely important when taking care of the elderly. They want others to be around other people so that they can interact with them.



Chapter 9

Choosing the Best Method of Caring for Seniors

There is a serious debate about which is the best method for taking care for our loved ones as they grow older. Some argue that the best care can be provided to seniors when they are living in their own homes or with a relative. Others believe that nursing homes can provide the best adult care.

This debate is endless and both sides present their arguments well. This chapter is going to focus on the advantages of living in nursing homes. We will also discuss the problems that may appear with these homes. Similarly, we will describe the facilities offered at nursing homes that are important for most seniors. Nursing homes also cause many problems that will be presented here as well.

We will also find other services that provide assistance to seniors and then discuss their availability. These factors are well-proven and people use them as important parameters when making decisions about selecting care for their loved ones.

We find that factors such as financial costs, medical needs and the personality of the senior are very important factors in making a final decision about the nature of support that will be the best fit in a particular case. There are also some other factors that have varying importance with regards to this important decision.

We believe that both methods have their merits and the final selection should be made according to the unique conditions that your loved one is suffering from. The decision should include all of the factors that we have discussed. Each individual must assess the situation of their loved ones carefully to decide the best course of action.

Let's start by discussing the three crucial factors that are mentioned above.

Financial Costs

The financial aspect of any decision is always important. It can be a limiting factor in many cases. Adult care can be very expensive if it is not covered by a medical insurance policy. Most long term care options are not covered in insurance plans. Government backed insurances such as Medicaid and Medicare are accepted only at certified nursing facilities, which do not have the ability to service all the seniors in the United States since their numbers are increasing very rapidly.

It is estimated that around 8,000 people are retiring each day in the country. This is putting a strain on the available resources that are designed to take care of seniors. Demands are

increasing for both in-home and nursing center services. With that said, this higher demand is giving rise to the emergence of new facilities that are not registered with government authorities and offer routine care services.

Research also shows that seniors want to remain in their homes for as long as possible. It's difficult for them to adjust to a new environment so they are usually hesitant to live at a nursing care facility. Therefore, home care is their first option, regardless of its discrepancies.

People tend to lose their social skills as they get older, so they are only comfortable around their children, relatives or other people that they have known for a long time. It's great to have your elders in your home if you are able to take care of them on a regular basis. However, this is not always an option.

On average, nursing homes charge around \$200 a day. Most assisted facilities that provide the basics (two meals a day and housekeeping) cost well over \$3,000 a month!

On the other hand, in-home care professionals can regularly charge roughly \$20 an hour. These professionals are also trained to take care of seniors suffering from diseases like Alzheimer's or Dementia. Many home care officials do not work independently and are available through agencies that provide different service bundles to suit the individual needs of the family.

These costs can quickly add up if home care services are used, but most elderly only require these services for a short period. This means that in-home service are a great low cost solution and affordable for either seniors or relatives who are taking care of them.

Nursing home costs can be much lower for patients who require assistance around the clock. These costs can also be covered by insurance in some cases. However, the problem is that long term care though is not covered by most policies. Still, there are several ways to lower the costs of living in nursing care centers that are run by many non-profit organizations.

Many seniors have found it difficult to keep up with the financial costs of both nursing homes and in-home care. These seniors either need financial support or have to manage their funds in a manner as to cover the costs of assisted living.

The decision on in-home care or selecting a nursing home hangs in a delicate balance in terms of the financial aspect. Both options can be costly. The best option is the one that our loved one is comfortable with and falls within the monetary resources available for the care of the individual.

Medical Needs

The medical needs of many seniors can dictate which care option should be selected for them. There are many individuals who undergo a difficult surgery and require a long recovery period

along with the services of a professional physiotherapist. Such recovery services can either be employed at home or at centers of assisted living.

These services might not be available with in-home care, which will force a person to live in a nursing home that provides a particular health care service. On the other hand, a senior might decide to spend the recovery period by employing the necessary medical services to provide home treatment.

Home treatment can be a costly option in this regard but studies show that a familiar atmosphere is extremely helpful in reducing the recovery time in case of major injuries issues (like hip injuries) that are often suffered by seniors. A senior might choose to remain in a known environment to remain calm and recover comfortably.

Many seniors also require specific medical treatments and surgeries that can only be done when they are placed in a very specific medical environment of hospitals and registered care centers. There are a lot of medical conditions that may require 24 hour care for a period of time. Nursing homes can then remain the only option suitable to provide the necessary service.

Full time home care services are also available, but they are too costly if taken for an extended period. The annual bill for total home care services can reach as high as \$150,000 dollars a month! Needless to say, that's impossible for most people to pay.

Many seniors also feel that they are a health threat and can cause problems for their children if they remain at home. They are relaxed at nursing homes because they're aware that these centers are designed to take care of any medical emergencies. Immediate medical help is available in these centers. Plus, they are also attached to a hospital.

Your Elder's Preferences

It's important for seniors to make the decision about their own health care. They are usually in the best position to make a decision because they know their own preferences. If you have a loved one, then you should aim to help them with this decision making by offering them your full support and explaining the options that they have regarding both home care and joining a nursing home.

According to most studies, seniors are prone to favor home care over other options for as long as possible. They only elect to leave their home if they are having a serious medical issue or have run out of money to be able to afford home care.

If you are supporting a senior, you need to support them emotionally so that they can make a decision that they are comfortable with. If they really to remain at home, then it would be a great gift to provide them with home care assistance.

You can also suggest to your loved ones to live in a nursing home if you believe that they cannot receive the necessary support at home. There are many assisted living options that are available to people who have limited financial resources because it is not always possible to financially support your loved ones.

Home care is still the number one preference of seniors in the United States. We suggest that you give preference to the option that puts the least amount of stress on your loved one. Both options can provide excellent care for seniors under different circumstances and it's essential to have a relaxed senior who is happy with his or her surroundings.

Nursing homes present an alternative solution that's sometimes the best option, especially if your loved one had an active social life. It is difficult to remain socially active while living at home. Assisted living facilities have registered medical practitioners who are able to take the necessary steps to care for your loved ones while also ensuring that they remain socially active. There are also basic health care facilities that are difficult to maintain at home due to their costs.

Accessibility

Accessibility is an important factor when assessing home care. You need to determine whether your home or your elder's home is in a place that is easy to access in case of a medical emergency. You also need to weigh factors such as the distance to the nearest hospital. Ensure that other important places, like the grocery store or a therapy center, are close enough to the home.

It's important to take care of a senior's medical care, as well as their regular shopping. Home maintenance and alteration are also important factors in this regard. The home needs to be in a condition so that it does not pose any hazard to the individual. It needs to have modifications according to the needs of your loved one.

The support of family is also important. You need to make sure that there is always someone present at a home and that medical help is available where your loved one is living. Sometimes, you might realize that you cannot provide regular support to your elders because of other obligations. This would play a huge role in your decision.

You need to assess all these availability issues before making a final recommendation to your loved one about whether they should stay at home or at a nursing care facility. You need to then be positive about the choice you support. If you believe that you cannot provide home support, then you need to be clear and communicate it with your loved one. There are amazing nursing homes that can provide an extremely high level of care that your loved ones are sure to enjoy.

In the case where you find that remaining at home would be the best for your loved one but you do not have the necessary time to always provide them support, you can seek the help of many facilities. You can work with respite service providers to ensure that your seniors always have the required social and physical support that they deserve in their old age.

Social Isolation

Seniors require regular contact with other people in order to practice their social skills regularly. Medical conditions can often limit their ability to move or make contact with others. This condition can create an isolated atmosphere that makes it very difficult for the individual to perform activities and tasks in an efficient manner.

They can become isolated either at home or at a nursing care center. Individual cases present different circumstances where senior citizens can be socially isolated, whether they stay at home or move to a nursing home that houses many people.

People can be isolated at home if their loved ones remain busy and cannot provide them the human element that they so desperately need to function as a normal person. Similarly, many seniors feel very isolated at assisted living centers because there are so many different people grouped together. They often find that there is nothing in common between themselves and other residents.

Social isolation in both cases is a recipe for disaster. Adults who face isolation fail to recover from diseases. Their physical and mental condition can quickly deteriorate. You need to ensure that you choose a solution where social isolation is eliminated as a limiting factor for seniors.

Suitable Solution for You

If you are responsible for taking care of your loved one and the only resources available to you in this regard are generated by you, then the solution needs to be clearly devised. You need to ensure that you are not under pressure when making a decision about taking care of your loved one.

There are many options for assisted living. You may also have room in your house and decide that you can accommodate your loved one there and provide them with a comfortable environment. On the other hand, you might feel that you do not have ample space and time to support them. In that case, you can select a good nursing home to care for your loved one.

You need to ensure that you make a decision based on the financial resources at your disposal. You also have to keep in mind that caring for seniors requires a lot of time as well. They might feel better if you are physically around them, but it is not necessary to absurdly change your schedule and support them in a manner that you cannot consistently maintain over a long period of time.

The ultimate decision is yours and you should make the one that is best suited for your unique circumstances. Don't worry about the "social norms" practiced by those around you. My only suggestion is that if you do have extra time and money available, then home care can keep your loved one happy and you can use home assistance services to help you take care of your loved one.

Discussing Home Care with the Elderly

The most important person who is going to be directly affected by your decision of either selecting home care or a nursing home is your loved one. He or she might find that the circumstances are beyond control and you have the final decision in the matter. It's still best to include them in your decision in a supporting and caring manner.

Your elders have lived through different conditions and circumstances. Only they know their true mental and physical condition. You can ask them for advice by discussing the various options that can be used to provide health care for them. This is a healthy activity to perform and it should be done as quickly as possible.

Sometimes, your elders might be at a health risk and you cannot be sure when their physical condition might deteriorate. It's better to discuss various care options with them when they are in their best physical shape. This also allows them to suggest solutions without having a prejudice due to a persisting physical or medical condition that may appear due to old age.

You can discuss both primary and secondary plans by sitting with your loved one. They may have an insurance policy that could cover some elements of their care. You might also suggest them a path where they can improve their financial resources and use them in a manner that doesn't overuse those assets.

You can also take the advice of a medical professional about the condition of your loved one, which will make it easier for you to decide if health care at home is the best solution. You should also consult with other family members who have taken care of your loved one in the past, since they also have a say in this matter.

You should always make a decision that is supported by everyone so that your loved one can remain content in the long run. The elderly require consistent moral support during tough times and you can ensure that by not imposing a decision on them. You should use a diplomatic tone and communicate a decision in a loving manner.

You will find that mountains can be moved with love and the most stubborn of adults can change their mind with the right amount of support.



Chapter 10

The Benefits of Home Care Services

Home care services are often the best option to take care of the needs of a senior. We will present some arguments here that describe the benefits that come with choosing home care services when taking care of your loved ones. The situation of each household is different, so it remains a personal decision to either opt for home care or to use a nursing home.

There are quite a few nursing homes available that have a good reputation. Many seniors are afraid of going to these centers. This is especially true when they have to go to such a facility for the first time. It is essential to allow seniors to stay in their own home for as long as possible. Provide them with the best care in order to delay the physical and mental conditions that force a senior to move into a facility that provides assisted living.

As multiple studies have shown, senior citizens prefer to stay at home. We find that it's important to describe the factors that are often attributed towards this decision. Seniors face many issues as they age and believe that they can be difficult to deal with. Therefore, they like to remain independent. The best option in this case is to remain at home.

Some of the important factors that influence our decision towards home care for adults are explained below according to the available research and trends found among senior citizens.

Time Saver

Home care allows you to keep track of the health of your loved ones. Plus, you don't have to drive for miles just to visit them. You can keep tabs on the progress of your loved one if he/she is receiving a treatment. Meanwhile, the environment in a nursing home makes it difficult to assess the condition of your loved one.

You can also perform many supporting activities for your loved ones if they are living at home. You can prepare their meals and allow your children to interact with them. It also saves time if you are the one who has to provide basic support such as driving them to the hospital or taking them to the park for a walk.

Social Interaction

Some people might argue that nursing homes can provide better social interaction than what can be gained while remaining at home but this is not always the case. It's possible that more social contact is available at a nursing center, but the quality of interaction is low when compared with socially interacting with children and grandchildren, which is available when the senior stays at home.

Seniors who live with their spouses remain healthier due to regular social contact. Similarly, senior citizens who have a regular hobby in which they can interact with other people have better health. This makes social interaction a very important factor because it improves the mental health of senior citizens.

Transportation

Transportation can be a problem for many seniors. They find it difficult to drive vehicles and some of them also suffer from a medical condition that requires them to travel in a particular manner. These special modifications cannot be made to all the available vehicles. You might have to alter your vehicle according to the special requirements and comfort of your loved one.

This ease of travel cannot be available when a person is residing in a nursing home. Seniors do not like to travel in ambulances. They want to feel sharp and hope to maintain their dignity for as long as possible. Easy transportation provided by a family member can be the best solution. They can maintain an active social life by using the support given to them by responsible children who are taking care of them.

Social Attachment

The primary reason for staying at home for as long as possible seems to be the fact that people become mentally attached to their home since they have spent a large part of their lives living there. They value it as a family member. For them, leaving is the same as the loss felt upon losing a loved one.

This social attachment is partially responsible for the positive effect experienced on the health of the senior when they are living in their home. Seniors understand that they require medical and social assistance. They are just more comfortable remaining in a well-known environment that they are able to understand better.

Most seniors are prone to slip and fall accidents. They find it easier to remain safe from these hazards if they are present in circumstances and surroundings in which they have a lot of prior experience. The happiness of a senior is often a deciding factor for you to provide home care for your loved ones.

Better Quality of Life

Quality of life presents a unique value that is immeasurable. Studies have found that since seniors remain healthier when they are in their homes, it must point to the fact that there are positive effects on the senior person. Social contact with caregivers who are related is the source of great satisfaction.

Seniors who are living in their own home and are assisted primarily by their own family members remain more content. Also, family members are not bound by the presence of an

adult. They can seek the help of a professional if they need a break due to a personal or professional need.

Seniors are happy with just a few hours given to them on a daily basis. Their health and happiness is all about receiving the companionship of people that they love and cherish. Most of them do not require much assistance, so home care presents the best option.

Enhancing Home Care

If you are confident that home care is the best option for your loved one but you are unsure about some of the problems that might appear during such care, you can take the help of many organizations and agencies who are able to provide you with the necessary support to take excellent care of your elders while letting them remain in their home.

There are some basic care services that you can provide in addition to your own input. We are going to explain each of these services.

Home Care for Grooming Needs

Many seniors do not feel comfortable when they require personal care from their loved ones. They can feel a bit awkward if they are bathed by a relative. Sometimes, you might find yourself struggling with a physical problem and it might not be possible to provide grooming assistance to your loved ones. There are many professional agencies and caretakers that you can hire to provide them with the required personal care right at home.

These grooming services only require a few hours and include activities like bathing and dressing the individual. Professionals can take care of the needs of your loved one very carefully, although no particular certifications are required. It just requires some basic grooming skills and a personality to go with those skills.

Health Care at Home

There are a few services that you might not be able to perform on your own. These include things like giving regular vaccinations or taking care of the incontinence needs of your loved one. Still, you don't always have to admit your loved one to a nursing home even if they require these types of services. There are many organizations that can provide you with a certified medical professional who is able to help administer these important services.

Some insurance policies even cover the costs of these visits if they are of a medical nature. Expert home care specialists can also provide hospice care for your loved ones. With their presence, the health needs of your loved one will be taken care of in a professional manner. In fact, that can provide certain advantages that you cannot. You can mix professional help with the calm environment of home for the ideal health care service.

Day Care Centers

Under certain circumstances, it can be dangerous to leave your loved one at home because he/she might be subject to facing conditions that can pose extreme health hazards. This usually happens to caretakers who are trying to balance their professional life with the care of their loved one, so they do not have someone around during the day.

There is always a chance of an accident or injury if a senior is alone at home. Furthermore, they might face constant loneliness and fall into depression which is very bad for their health. This is especially true if they have issues with their physical health. You can select a good daycare center for them in this regard. These centers are designed to provide support to senior citizens and allow them to pass time in a positive and engaging manner.

These daycare centers are often able to provide special care for seniors who might be suffering from a particular health problem such as memory loss. There are also daycare centers that can be described as social meeting places. The choice of a good day care center depends on the needs of your loved one. You can make a decision about them while consulting with professional experts.



Chapter 11

Final Thoughts

The truth is that most important topics need more research in order to find appropriate areas of improvement. Elderly care is one such topic where we believe that there is a lot of room for improvement through research. More studies will discover the impact of different variables while taking care of our old ones as they reach their twilight years. We believe that this book will ultimately help many people decide the best choice of care for their loved ones.

As I have stated repeatedly throughout this book, there is no one solution that will meet the needs of all senior citizens. Everyone is different and lives under different circumstances. Seniors all have unique personalities. We urge people to research more when making a decision about their loved ones.

The best course of action is to search for solutions while keeping your own unique circumstances in mind. Seek help from professional agencies when needed. These agencies are quite resourceful at providing different care options. They generally have access to a geriatric expert who is able to assess the condition of your loved one and provide you with advice about the best course of action.

This book should serve as a guide that enhances your desire to seek more information about taking care of your loved ones in the best manner available to you. It will help you to see the concepts of care in a logical manner, giving you the opportunity to enhance your knowledge and make better decisions.

This book is also quite useful for the elderly. Many seniors are not dependent on anyone and are in generally good health. However, they still need to make a decision about their future because they might find themselves in a situation where circumstances force them into a decision.

Seniors can also use this book to make a decision that can provide the best care for them. We urge our seniors to not only study this book, but also recommend it to their friends so that our important elderly citizens are aware of their care options and can ultimately make their own decisions.

