

THE 3 BIGGEST MISTAKES FAMILIES MAKE WHEN CARING FOR ELDERLY PARENTS

Discovering your loved one requires care in their senior years is a daunting stage of life for everyone involved. There is a huge learning curve. It's all so new, and there will be more to consider than you initially thought.

As much as you will try to avoid making mistakes it will inevitably happen while moving through this new territory. We can help you navigate your new journey.



Here are a few of the biggest mistakes we see families make when they care for their elderly parents:

1. Underestimating the demands on your schedule

The time you are now allocating to your elderly parent means time taken away from other areas and responsibilities in your life.

FAMILY — Since you will be spending a large amount of time caring for your parent, you should remember how much time this will be taking away from your usual family routines and dynamics. Children and spouses won't be getting the time and attention they are accustomed to and spouses and other family members will have to help around the house and childcare, creating new potential stressors on the family as a whole.

WORK — If you are working, it's possible that your job performance may suffer. Remember, if you work during the day, that doctor appointments will likely take place during your working hours. Vacation time and sick days are quickly depleted with said doctors appointments and emergency visits. And, as your parent ages, the time required of you increases. This may leave you with a sense of never fully adjusting to your new role as a caretaker.

CONSTANT WORRY — If you are caring for an elderly parent and have a family, house or job, you will worry that your parent is not getting the full attention required. There will be times your parent is alone for long periods of the day and you will fear they have fallen or something has happened. All of this creates a snowball effect of difficult feelings that the entire family shares.

We are here to help. Call us today at **480.447.8893**.

2. Underestimating the emotional toll

There are several emotional components to consider before becoming your parent's caregiver.

NOT REALIZING HOW BEING THE CARETAKER WILL AFFECT YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR PARENTS

— Your parents know they are a burden on you, and this will change your emotional dynamics as the parent and the child. Your parent will require more support and care, but may be afraid to ask because they know the toll that will take on you. For example, they may not make or will put off doctor's appointments because of the time it will take. Additionally, growing old can be isolating which results in extreme loneliness. Your aging parent will require more time with people and need assistance getting out to social activities.

ASSISTING YOUR PARENT EQUALS MORE THAN COMPANIONSHIP — When you become the caretaker for your elderly parent, you become their "geriatric care manager". This translates into you managing doctor's appointments, finances, housing requirements, medications, food and errands. This takes up an enormous amount of time. You must be careful to be aware of any feelings of resentment that may arise.

SELF-CARE — The above is a lot under the best of circumstances and you will feel stretched in many directions at times. You will need to be extremely rigid about maintaining your own wellness, including diet, sleep and exercise. Statistics show that adult children taking care of their parents develop chronic stress, which can lead to their own health risks, so you must take care of yourself, too.

3. It's hard for most elderly parents to be completely honest with their children

Elderly parents feel vulnerable and sometimes embarrassed about their needs.

MOST PARENTS WANT TO FEEL THEY ARE AT THEIR BEST WHEN SEEING THEIR CHILDREN

— This is a whole difficult transition for all involved, but perhaps most of all for your elderly parent. After years of raising you, it's unbelievably difficult for the tables to turn where they now receive help from you. For a parent to let go of their independence to their child, is a whole extra emotional journey that may not have been considered when deciding on their care plan.

PARENTS WILL OFTEN HIDE THEIR TRUE CONDITION

— Because of the above, it is common for parents to understate their true condition and try to minimize their concerns or medical issues that feel more private, such as incontinence or feelings of depression.

PARENTS MAY BE AFRAID TO ASK YOU IMPORTANT QUESTIONS

— If parents are embarrassed about their condition and concerns, it is likely they hide questions they have about their health and their future. It is imperative questions are addressed so they have the answers they need for their peace of mind and maintenance of good health.

For these reasons and more, considering a trained and skilled home caregiver may be something you want to explore.

This is where we come in.

The job of an unrelated, in-home caregiver is to serve as a layer of professionalism so your parents can be forthright about these and many other topics. In-home care eliminates the possible negative impact on family dynamics. It also does away with feelings of embarrassment that are so common when parents are forced to be vulnerable with their kids. In-home care provides your parent with more feelings of independence in their lives and could be a better alternative overall.



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