

CREATING A COMPREHENSIVE FAMILY CARE PLAN



The goal is to make sure our loved one(s) receive the best care and support needed as they age. In addition, the plan is intended to ascertain the roles of the family in that care.

- **Initial steps**

The goal of the initial Conversation, conducted by adult children with a sibling or siblings and possibly older grandchildren, is to help create a plan of action on how to start the Family Conversation. It is important to be on the same page to avoid hurt feelings/being left out, or feeling ambushed. You know your family best, so keep in mind that the people involved may be different, maybe it is a daughter and mom's sister or best friend, etc. If there are family members that have a strained relationship with the loved one(s), or if you are an only child, professional guidance may be necessitated. The most successful plans begin with the Family Conversation conducted by an alpha adult child or the one with the closest relationship to the older loved one.

- **Family Conversation with the Loved One(s) - It's All About Them!**

From working with families throughout the United States, a common theme that has worked well when first beginning to have these tough conversations, and to avoid the loved one(s) feeling ambushed, is to have an adult child place a call to the loved one and "ask for advice" from them. Many times our loved ones want to help and rarely turn down this request. From here, the questions begin. This conversation may turn into many conversations, and getting answers may be challenging, but very needed.

- **As the Conversation Grows Deeper**

It may take more than one conversation to discuss all of these topics, and the hope is that this opens the communication wave between all care partners. This plan needs to be flexible, starting with the wants and desires, and moving into the what-ifs, what-nexts. After discussing where they want to live and how to best support them in doing so, it will be important to look more into the medical needs, care, legal, and financial pieces of this puzzle as well.

- *Providing Care*
- *Legal Matters*
- *Financial Matters*

- **The Plan is a Living Document, Remember...**

This plan begins with looking at the current wants and needs, but as life happens, and potential health events arise, there needs to be an understanding that this is flexible. Prepare the family for the possibility of continuous change and update per change and/or health event(s). Continue to focus on the wants/needs of the loved one(s), and be realistic for roles of the adult children/grandchildren/others involved. This plan is the starting point, and we encourage regular communication between care partners/family.



Initial steps (Adult Children and Older Grandchildren)

- Who is this Care Plan for? _____
- Who needs to be involved in the Initial Conversation?

- Who will be the one (or two) that start the conversation with your loved one(s)?

Family Conversation with the Loved One(s) - It's All About Them!

- Where do they want to live as they age? _____
- If they want to stay at home:
 - Is the layout safe? _____
 - Does it work for care, as they age? _____
 - Are there stairs to get in/out of the home? _____
 - Are there different levels of flooring in the home? _____
 - Thresholds from one room to the next? _____
 - Do the bathrooms have wide enough access for a wheelchair? _____
 - Is there at least one bathroom, preferably on the first floor with a walk-in shower? _____
 - Are there grab bars in the shower? _____
 - Is there "stuff" cluttering the home? _____
 - How can the home be modified to better suit their needs now, and for the future?

- If something were to happen to them, who do they want to care for them?
(Think of a hip/knee replacement, a fall or injury, illness, etc)

Important Information to Keep In Mind:

