



LEGACY
HOME CARE

7 STEPS TO SUPPORT YOUR AGING PARENT

A Workbook for Adult Children



ASSESSMENT | STEPS 1-4

TAKE ACTION | STEPS 5-7



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STEP 1



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Assess *Their* Situation

Caring for a parent can feel overwhelming because you may not be sure what needs to be done. A good first step is to look at eight key areas of living.

Take five minutes to think about each of the following areas.



FAMILY SUPPORT



HOME SAFETY



MEDICAL NEEDS



COGNITIVE HEALTH



MOBILITY



PERSONAL HYGIENE



MEAL PREP



SOCIAL INTERACTION

Then, make a list of **strengths** in each area, as well as **concerns**.



Topic: Family Support	
STRENGTHS	CONCERNS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Daughters Gina and Stacy can help on evenings & weekends• Mom has lots of close friends and a sister that can provide emotional and social support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who can help during the week while Stacy/Gina are at work?• Son, Craig lives in NYC and cannot physically help often• No neighbors close by to help watch over the house or help out in a pinch



STEP 2

Assess Your Situation

Caring for an aging loved one can be challenging, and it's very common to overextend yourself while balancing other responsibilities such as work, other relationships, and caring for your own health & wellbeing. To be able to help your aging parent get the best possible support, it's important to first take a step back and consider your own situation.

Consider the following questions:

- 1 What other life responsibilities do you have? (i.e. work duties, other relationships, children, etc.)
- 2 Does your own health allow you to physically care for someone?
- 3 Do you live close enough to visit as often as needed?
- 4 Do you have the kind of relationship that allows you to spend a lot of time together without creating a lot of negative feelings on either side?
- 5 Would you want to live with them, either in their house or yours?
- 6 Are you willing to learn how to provide the care that is needed?
- 7 What back-up support would you have in an emergency?

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STEP 3



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Assess The Finances

As much as we wish it didn't, money matters. Knowledge can be power, though, when it comes to finances. Here are a few simple steps to help wrap your hands around where the money is currently being spent, so you can better grasp what options will work for your aging parent.

Set up a simple budgeting spreadsheet that tracks the money spent in the last 3-6 months. You can use estimated numbers if you are unable to get the true numbers.

Bonus Tip:
Research Local Elder Law Options →

Elder Law Attorneys can be very helpful as your family navigates finances and they can offer expert insights from their experience.

MONTHLY EXPENSES

EXPENSE TYPE	JULY 2021	AUG. 2021	SEPT. 2021
Medical Costs: Clinic Visits, Medications, etc.	\$347		
Rent/Mortgage	\$1,430		
Groceries/Meals	\$380		
Other Housing Electricity, Gas, Water/Sewer, etc.	\$328		
Transportation Car, Gas, etc.	\$172		
Entertainment	\$134		
Other:	\$79		

Look into current and potential payor sources.

1. Current health insurance
2. Long-term-care insurance options
3. Available assistance programs

STEP 4



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Talk It Out with Your Parent

Involving your aging loved in all possible decisions is always best. Many times, needing additional care and support with age can also mean losing independence. Offering choices when looking at the best options for your parent can go a long way in finding a safe solution that everyone can live with.

BEFORE THE CONVERSATION:

- 1 Put yourself in your parent's shoes. How would you want your own children to approach you with their concerns as you age?
- 2 Keep an open mind, and remind yourself that there aren't necessarily any "right" or "wrong" options.
- 3 Understand that there might need to be multiple conversations in order to allow for all areas of concern to be addressed.
- 4 Do you have the kind of relationship that allows you to spend a lot of time together without creating a lot of negative feelings on either side?
- 5 Be prepared to listen. The more you can listen to your aging loved one, the more you can understand their priorities, wishes, wants, and needs. This will help you know where they are coming from and find the best solutions.



** "Dad, I don't want what happened to Maurice's family to happen to us. It would give me peace of mind if there was a plan in place, in case something like that ever happened to our family."*



CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- A "Mom, I admire how you've handled retirement. What advice can you give me as I approach retirement myself?"
- B "Dad, I've noticed that it takes more energy for you to _____. What would make doing this easier for you?"
- C Use a current event or event in a friend/family member's life to break the ice. **See above.*

STEP 5



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Take Home Safety Measures

Ideally, you would have time to be able to carefully assess all aspects of your loved one's situation before leaping into action. The reality for most, however, is that we start thinking about additional support for mom or dad in times of emergency. This could involve a health crisis, or the sudden realization that you are burnt out as the primary caregiver.

If you are in urgent need of providing safety to your parents, here are some quick, easy (and fairly inexpensive) steps you can take immediately to make their current home as safe as possible:

- 1 Make sure all floors & walkways are clear of clutter, cords, and rugs.
- 2 Add grab bars in the bathroom, and stair railings throughout.
- 3 Update lights so all rooms are bright and switches are easily accessible.
- 4 Ensure all appliances work well and are within easy reach.
- 5 Minimize the need to use step-stools or have to bend down low.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FALL PREVENTION

Many of these safety measures are to prevent falls. In those aged 65+, falls are the leading cause of injury-related death, according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). The simple steps above can minimize the risk of falling and can help prolong quality living for your aging loved one.



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Make Communication Easy

Having phones and other lines of communication readily available for your aging parent offers both safety and social connection. It also enables the person to maintain some independence and reassurance that help is there when needed.

Here are some actionable steps to take to ensure your aging parent easily reaches you when needed:



ENSURE PHONE LINES IN THE HOUSE ARE EASY TO USE AND READILY ACCESSIBLE

Have a phone in each room or at a minimum one centrally located on each floor.



CONSIDER AN EASY-TO-USE CELL PHONE

A cell phone that you can program with several key numbers on speed-dial (like yours, other family members, and their primary clinic) can be a lifesaver. The cell phone should be kept in their pocket for easy accessibility.



CONSIDER A MEDICAL ALERT DEVICE

In cases of emergencies, a medical alert device, commonly worn around the neck or wrist, is a great option. If your parent falls, they may not be able to reach the nearest phone, or potentially be able to access their pocket for a cell phone.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MINIMIZING ISOLATION & LONELINESS

Unfortunately, isolation & loneliness become increasingly common with age due to physical limitations, and it can have a major negative effects on overall health. Besides being a good safety precaution, phones can also add a way for your aging parent to stay socially connected.



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Select the Best Care Option

There almost always comes a time to consult professionals and hire additional help for your aging parent. Getting a team of experts and the right care can drastically improve your family's quality of life and reduce stress on your relationships. There are many great options and it is important to pick the option that suits you and your family best.

FIRST, CONSULT THE EXPERTS ON AGING:

GERIATRIC CARE MANAGERS

These experts on local services can help guide your aging parent towards the best quality services in the area. Check with your insurance to see if they have GCMs available, or do a simple internet search for fee-for-service GCMs that are near your aging parent.



GERIATRICIAN

Consider finding a primary physician for your aging loved one that specializes in caring for older adults. It helps to have a doctor on your team that understands the effects of the aging process and the unique challenges older adults often face.



AREA AGENCY ON AGING

This is the county-level government office that serves local seniors, typically for free. It's a great starting point because they connect you with helpful local resources and government programs.



THEN, FIND THE RIGHT CARE AT HOME:

IN-HOME CAREGIVING

Home Care agencies can provide care to your aging parent wherever they call home. Services can range from a few hours per day to 24/7 & may include help with meal prep, housekeeping, medication management, companionship, and more.



FIND THE RIGHT AGENCY FOR YOU

Get free consultations from a few local home care agencies with good online reviews to ensure you find the best agency for you & your family.

ASSISTED LIVING & SENIOR COMMUNITIES

Senior communities offer simpler living arrangements, socialization opportunities with peers, and onsite medical professionals to help care for your aging loved one(s).



TAKE TOURS

Most senior communities offer free tours and this can be a great no-obligation way to have your parent see the amenities for themselves.

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