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Elder Care: Nursing Home Alternatives

Making the decision to put a loved one in a nursing home can be difficult, especially when the need for round-the-clock care is only necessary on sporadic days. Another challenge comes about when there are other options available; however, they require your family to make significant adjustments to their lifestyle. In order to make a decision that everyone is comfortable with, it's important to consider the alternatives before you decide that a nursing home is the right choice to make.

Depending on your location, financial resources, and care needs, finding an alternative to a nursing home may be easy or difficult. Once you have identified your loved one's needs and compared them against the resources you have at your disposal, you will be in a good place to compare programs and find one that is right for your loved one.

Community-Based Care

These programs include telephone support, home maintenance and repair, transportation, meal delivery, and in-home visitations.

Daily Care Services for Adults

Akin to child care programs, adult care services can include all-day, morning, afternoon, and possibly evening care for patients depending on the needs of your schedule.

Subsidized Housing for Non-Medical Need Seniors

These services are offered by some federal and state programs that provide housing for low- to moderate-income patients. Many programs include assistance with shopping, laundry, and housecleaning needs. Many residents get an individual apartment in a shared complex.

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Home Care Programs

These services specialize in cooking, cleaning, bathing, grooming, and dressing elder care patients.

At-Home Care Programs

These programs provide care for a few hours or all day from semi-skilled/skilled medical care professionals at home. This is an alternative to nursing homes for patients who live with family members but have special medical needs that require visitations from professionals.

Assisted Living Services

These programs provide living spaces for elder care patients to rent and pay added fees for special, additional services. The assistance these facilities may provide includes meal preparation, laundry, medication schedules, religious programs, and recreational activities.

Board/Care Homes

Like assisted living facilities, board and care homes provide a group-living environment that includes care services, assistance with daily living needs, and opportunities for socialization. Board and care homes are often not covered by Medicare or Medicaid and may not maintain the same strict regulations that state or federal agencies monitor. Some board and care homes may be covered under certain insurance programs or other medical assistance plans.

Adapted from Life Advantages - Author Delvina Miremadi ©2014

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Your Employee Assistance Program

Moving From Grief to Acceptance

After a loss, it's not uncommon for people to experience grief. However, grief is not limited to experiences with death. Grief can manifest from the loss of a job, a move away from close friends, a divorce, or tough breakup.

Stages of Grief

Grief commonly occurs in five stages; however, just as we are all different, our grief may also come in different forms. The five stages are denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance, and they serve as a framework by which we all may go through the pain and grief we experience after a loss. Experiencing one or more of these stages can provide the comfort and peace of mind that you are moving forward in a positive direction and coping with the loss you have experienced.

Stage 1: Denial

During denial, it's hard for you to believe that the loss has actually happened. You may often feel numb and in a haze. It is possible during this time to carry on with your daily activities as if nothing has happened, and everything is the same as it was. This innate coping mechanism occurs as a survival mechanism. The shock and pain of loss is often too hurtful to take in all at one time. As time passes, however, acknowledging the event is an important part of healing and moving forward.

Stage 2: Anger

In the second stage, you become frustrated by the fact that you're vulnerable, that you have no control over what's happened, and you begin to look for the events and people that you can blame. Anger is the bridge from numbness to feeling, and once you get through the anger, you are able to peel away the many layers of pain associated with the loss.

Stage 3: Bargaining

During this stage you often fall into "if" statements, such as "What if I had done this?" You want to bargain with your life to try to get back what you used to have, change what happened, or even try to replace the pain with something else.

Stage 4: Depression

In the fourth stage, depression sets in. You can begin to feel overwhelmed by the situation and hopeless about the future. You may withdraw from your life and feel as if there is no reason to go on. This can be a very difficult but necessary part of the grieving process. When you lose someone you love, it's a natural reaction to feel it in the deepest part of your heart.

Stage 5: Acceptance

The fifth and final stage is related to acceptance. You're finally able to accept the reality of what's happened and begin to look for avenues to move on. It's important that, during this stage, you accept how this loss has changed your life and stop wishing for everything to go back to how it used to be. Your life is forever changed and it is now time to seek out new meaning.

Moving on is related directly to the nature of the loss, how resilient you are to grief, and the support networks you have in place to assist you when hard times come. The order and experience with these stages may differ from one individual to the next, but that doesn't mean they're any less important. If you become stuck in one stage or are unable to cope with the loss over a long period of time, you might need to seek the assistance of a trained professional.

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