

The logo for Elderly Care Concierge features the words "ELDERLY CARE" stacked above "CONCIERGE" in a dark blue, sans-serif font. A blue heart icon is positioned between the two words, replacing the letter 'O' in "CONCIERGE".

ELDERLY CARE
CONCIERGE

Four Things to Think About When Caring for Your Parents

Caring for a parent is more than fixing meals and having telephone conversations. For so many people, it involves the complete care of their parents at a time when they need it most. So many of us are thrust into this role by an accident, a change in circumstances, or just realizing it is time. Since we are not trained or taught on how to go about caring for our parents, it is nice to know at least where to start. Here are the four things you need to think about when it is your time to take the next step.

1 Have “The” Conversation With Your Entire Family

Research shows that the hardest part of elderly care is just starting the conversation about, is it time, and if so, how do we start? The first conversation needs to be between the entire family. Perhaps that is with the children first, then the parents. Perhaps it starts with one of the parents. Either way, you can open the conversation by structuring it around non-threatening questions. Do we know where the legal papers are, and are they all in order? Have you read this article about challenges for the aging population? What should our plan be for the next five years? What are your feelings about this this situation?

Be open to all responses and make no statements about absolutes or here’s the plan. Make it collaborative and open to all opinions. Then you can use this as a basis for further discussions.

2 Create Your Support Team

Identifying the immediate needs, (and then future ones), will help with assigning or finding the correct Support team and services. Perhaps it is family members for now, but realizing as needs change, it is time to bring in more help. Identify the strengths of your family members and delegate those tasks to members who have the passion for that area. Start with home maintenance, social engagement, physical assessment, and organization skills. The challenge is it takes multiple skills and talents to care for aging parents, and no one person can do it alone. Be open to forming a cross functional team, and do not feel guilty if those skills do not fall within your area of expertise. Build a complete team!

3 Create a Plan That Works for Everyone

At this stage, a written plan is just the first step. Don't worry about making it perfect, just get something down in writing for everyone to review. It starts with immediate needs, first things first. Break the plan down into time allotments such as monthly, every six months, and finally annually.

The plan should contain action items (delegated to the Support team) that need to be investigated or addressed. Examples could be:

- a. Next week identify a transportation company that can take Mom to her monthly doctor appointments.
- b. In the next two weeks identify maintenance items around the house that need to be done and find a repair service to bid on them.
- c. Next month gather the pertinent legal papers and organize them for presentation to an elderly legal firm for advice.

This important step of creating a plan helps visualize the tasks needed. While some may be urgent, others may just be important. Make sure to identify both and get them on the action plan.

4 Find the Correct Support Companies

You have done the hard work of having the conversation, identifying the family members that will be involved, and creating a plan of what needs to be done. Now, how do you find the right service companies to carry out the plan.

Our members tell us that the toughest challenge they had was finding reputable service providers that were caring, professional and diligent. Most of us are doing this for the first time and simply start with an internet search. We have multiple conversations with the companies, ask for referrals, and then hope they are the right choice. Here is where a service like Elderly Care Concierge can help. We have already done the hard work of arranging for vetted, professional, and elderly sensitive service providers. We have interviewed them, used them, and have member feedback surveys about them. We can relieve the stress of this last stage with a simple phone call. Elderly Care Concierge is here to help.