



## **Uncertain Paths- Transitioning to Home Care (page 1)**

Your mom is in the skilled nursing facility and the social worker/case manager is talking to you about sending her home. It is recommended that she not be without personal care assistance/home care. All of a sudden, there are many decisions to make.

- Do you bring her to your home?
- Do you care for her every day in her own home?
- Do you contact a home care agency or hire a caregiver privately?
- No matter what is decided, this is unfamiliar territory that brings to surface many fears and anxiety. Hiring outside help for a parent creates a tremendous storm of emotions.
- Normal thought processes include:
  - You know that no one can care for your parent the way you do, or at least not with as much love and concern.
  - You truly wish you could care for your loved one full-time, you just can't.
  - Your parent is most likely in a vulnerable state.
  - They may not have ever needed to have an outsider care for them before. Their anxiety about this can easily increase
  - yours.

You know that at some point, you will have to get back to other aspects of your life, causing a sense of urgency. You will not be able to oversee every detail of care once that care has been entrusted to a caregiver.

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## Uncertain Paths- Transitioning to Home Care (page 2)

Here are a few helpful hints to follow to assure a smooth transition for you and your loved one.

1. Remember that this is a major life transition for both you and your parent.
2. This is causing anxiety for everyone involved because it is a significant departure from the 'norm'. Give yourself permission to feel the anxiety, fear and guilt. However, don't allow it to cause you to make sweeping decisions that might eliminate YOUR anxiety, but create more for your loved one.
3. Make a plan of action that takes into account EVERYONE's needs and expectations. Don't leave yourself out of the equation. Decide how much care and support you can realistically provide on a consistent basis and use this as a benchmark when hiring outside help. For instance, you could agree to do the grocery shopping once a week, pick up prescriptions, transport to medical appointments, etc.
4. Remember that your presence and involvement is still crucial. Even if the caregiver is Florence Nightingale reincarnated, your loved one still needs YOU. By continuing to offer assistance and support in a predictable way, you will be providing a sense of a familial continuity that cannot be duplicated. Just remember to set your boundaries so that you are not overextending yourself.
5. Have clear expectations outlined when meeting with your caregiver including housework, meal preparation, care needs and preferences, work schedule, personality preferences, etc. This provides a firm foundation on which to start, eliminating guesswork on the part of the caregiver and frustration on the part of the family.
6. Make sure these expectations and needs are clearly defined in a Plan of Care to be followed by the caregiver with an established system of reporting.
7. Let go. Allow your caregiver the freedom to establish a routine and rhythm in the home. Accept that they are not you and will have a different work-style. As long as good care is being provided and she/he is a good personality fit, you are ahead of the game.
8. When faced with a major life transition, we are forced to adapt. In order to adapt successfully, remember to be honest with all involved about your limitations, anxieties and fears. There is no 'right' way to be/feel. By focusing on the best solution for all involved, you will be able to come through for yourself and your parent, laying the groundwork for a smooth and successful transition.

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