

Helpful hints

- Use respectful listening and keep an open mind. There will be differences in opinions, values, and relationships.
- Listen to what the older family member has to say. Talk directly to him/her and provide extra time as needed.
- Use “I” statements to express your needs, feelings, and concerns.
- No interrupting or side conversations.
- Turn off cell phones, radio and TV.
- Stay focused on the purpose “helping Dad maintain independent living for as long a possible” or “planning for a move”.
- Avoid using “always” or “never”.
- Give everyone an opportunity to be heard.
- Avoid making assumptions. Ask questions to get the facts.
- Remember that your family member has the right and responsibility to make his or her own decisions.



Resources for older adults and family caregivers

The Senior LinkAge Line® 1-800-333-2433

The Senior LinkAge Line® is a statewide information and assistance service to help you find local services, supports and information including respite care, caregiver support services, health insurance counseling, chores, meals and transportation.

MinnesotaHelp.info® www.MinnesotaHelp.info

MinnesotaHelp.info® of the Minnesota Board on Aging is a web-based tool designed to help people in Minnesota find caregiver supports, resources, information, financial assistance and other forms of help.

Minnesota Board on Aging www.mnaging.org

This information is available in other forms to people with disabilities by calling 651-431-2500 or 800-882-6262 or through the Minnesota Relay Service at 711 or 1-800-627-3529 (TTY), 1-877-627-3848 (speech-to-speech relay services).

This brochure is provided by federal grant funding from the U.S. Administration on Aging through the Minnesota Board on Aging and Minnesota Area Agencies on Aging.



Holding a Family Meeting

Steps to address eldercare issues and share the care



HOW A FAMILY MEETING CAN HELP

- Builds understanding about changes in an older adult's health or ability to function.
- Increases communication and sharing of caregiving responsibilities.
- Finding solutions and making tough caregiving decisions.



HOLDING A FAMILY MEETING

- Are you concerned about a health change in your parent, spouse or sibling?
- Do you need additional help caring for your spouse or parent? Would you like other family members to play more of a role?
- Are out of town family members visiting and wanting to help?

It may be time to hold a Family Meeting

A “family meeting” is a chance for spouses, children, and others involved to discuss the care of an older family member. It helps families identify needs, share responsibilities and come up with a plan that will best serve the older adult and family as a whole.

A family meeting respects the older adult and his or her wishes and decisions. It also acknowledges and supports the primary caregiver.

It is best to hold a family meeting as early as possible after a need arises.

Before the Family Meeting

- Ask both the older adult and primary caregiver whom they want to attend. Consider all relevant family members.
- Pick a convenient date, time and place. Arrange a conference call if possible for family members who cannot attend.
- Make a list of issues to be discussed based on the goals of the older adult and primary caregiver.
- Keep the agenda small so each issue receives full attention and allow time to discuss next steps.
- Collect information that may be helpful to the meeting such as medical reports or legal documents.
- Consider a professional (social worker, caregiver consultant, or clergy member) to facilitate the meeting, as needed. Contact the Senior LinkAge Line® at 1-800-333-2433 to find a caregiver consultant to assist with family meetings.

A family meeting respects the older adult and his or her wishes and decisions



The Family Meeting

- Arrange seating so all can see and hear each other.
- Start the meeting with a welcome.
- Select a person to take notes on decisions, assignment of tasks, and follow-up items.
- Review the agenda and use it to stay on task.
- Address the most important issues first so they receive full attention.
- Reach a sense of closure on each issue. Put issues that arise during the meeting in a “parking lot” to be addressed later.
- Create a plan that includes what needs to be done and who will do it. Include a back up plan in case of emergency.
- Summarize the discussion and review all decisions made.
- Identify a family spokesperson who will communicate decisions to non-family members such as home care, physician, medical team and others who need to know.
- Plan the next meeting, as needed.

Follow-up

If the older adult agrees, share the plan with those who need to know. Stay connected through mail, phone calls, email or website.

