

Family Care Giving

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Who Are the Family Caregivers?

- 22.4 million to 54 million nationally
- *Bottom line is that millions of Americans are providing care to family members on a long term basis*
- You may well be one of them

Typical Family Caregivers

- Typical family caregiver was a 46 year old woman caring for her widowed mother who does not live with her
- It can also be:
 - Husband caring for his wife
 - Sons or daughter-in laws caring for father or mother
 - Wife caring for a husband
 - Nieces & nephews caring for aunts or uncles
 - Sisters for brothers, brothers for sisters

The Economic Impact of Family Caregiving on the Economy

- The economic value of family caregiving in the United States was estimated in 2004 to be as high as \$483 billion savings to the health care system
- 1 in 10 of all employed adults in US are caring for an adult family member outside of work
- Costs to the workforce:
 - Decreased productivity
 - Loss of 5-12 days a year
 - Increased turnover

The Cost of Family Caregiving for the Caregiver

- Out of pocket medical expenses often picked up by caregivers
- Lost wages
- Costs of caring from a distance:
 - Costs of transportation
 - Cost of worry

Why do we care for our family members in our home or theirs?

- Because we want to
- Because we think it is the right thing to do
- Because we think it is the best thing to do
- Sometimes because we don't know what else to do
- Sometimes we think it is the most cost effective

What do we worry about – Leaving Mom or Dad Alone

- Showering or bathing
- Falls
- Cooking – will they leave the stove on?
- Elder con artists
- Will they tell me when they need something?

Signs that the Current Plan is Not Working for the Cared for

- Weight loss
- Skipping meals
- Eating unsafe foods
- Eating non-nutritional meals
- Wandering
- Forgetting to take medication
- Taking wrong medication
- Falls
- Isolation
- Decrease in their usual cleanliness

How to Tell if Family Caregiving is Putting Too Much Stress on You

- Feeling sad or moody
- Having a low energy level
- Feeling like you don't have any time for yourself
- Having trouble sleeping
- Eating too little or too much
- Seeing friends less often
- Losing interest in hobbies

Signs that the Current Plan is Not Working for the Caregiver

- Feeling angry at the person your are caring for or at other people
- Family member is at the “breaking point”
- Guilt and depression
- Loss or potential loss of employment of caregiver

Long Term Impact of Care Giving on the Family Caregiver

- Stress of family caregiving for persons with dementia depresses a person's immune system for up to three years *after* the caregiving ends
- Family caregivers are much more likely to experience **depression**, particularly those caring for a spouse.
- Family caregivers have **higher death rates** than those not caring for a family member

So what can we do now?

- Have you picked your Nursing Home?
- I plan to live my entire life in my home.
- I will never live with my children.
- We can talk about this later, when I need help.

What are the options?

Assisted Living vs. Nursing Home Care – what is the difference?

Assisted Living

- Apartment living
- Need some support with Activities of Daily Living

Nursing Home

- Institutional living
- Need heavy assistance with Activities of Daily Living
- Skilled assessment needed to determine appropriate level
- Assisted Living may prevent the need for Skilled Nursing Home Care

Assisted Living:

- Home like atmosphere
- Furnished with your own furniture, pictures, memories
- A place for family to visit
- Transportation for appointments
- Full schedule of activities
- New Friends
- Help with the problems that made it hard to live alone
- Safety:
 - Checks at night
 - Assistance with showering or dressing
- Medication supervision
 - Care manager supervise daily medication
 - Pharmacy or family will deliver new medications if needed
- Meals:
 - Restaurant style meals – right in the dining room
 - Escorts if needed to remember to go to meals
 - Choices every meal
 - Nutritional oversight of menus
 - Between meal snacks available
 - Snack kitchen in each apartment
- Social opportunities
- Full calendar of activities
- Transportation
- Home maintenance responsibilities lifted
- Safety concerns lifted

For many people Assisted Living is the best of both worlds

- Feels like home
- Safer
- Easier on family
- Not the dreaded Nursing Home

Respite Care

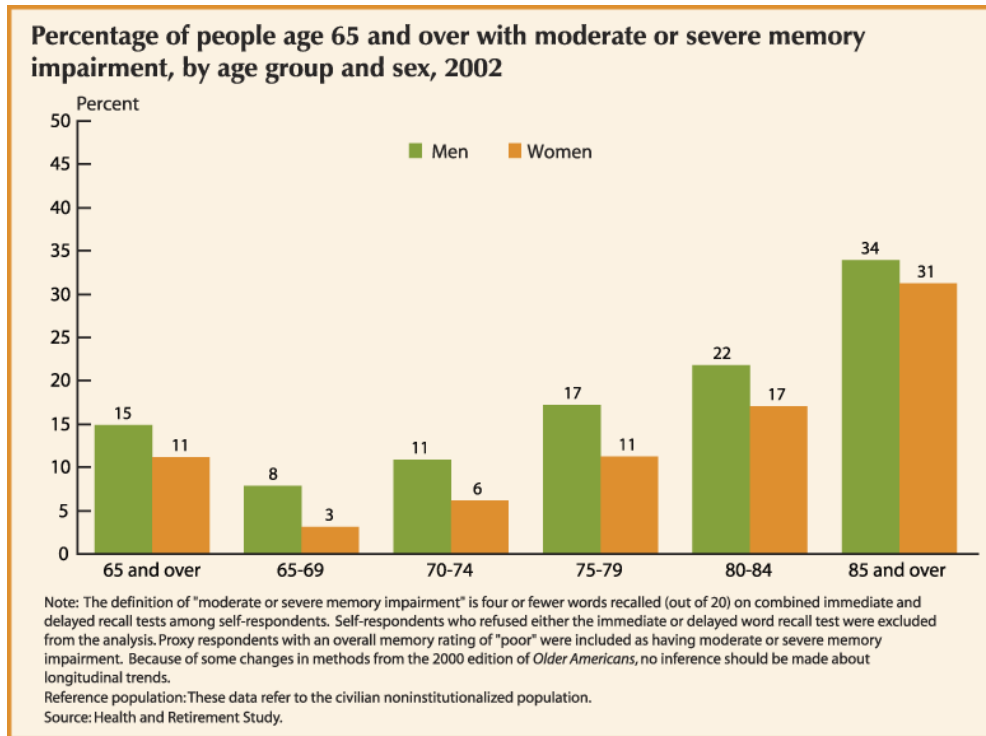
- Temporary arrangement
- Rental by the days to weeks
- Furnished apartment with meals and assistance at AL level of care
- Provide the support to keep Mom at home by giving care giver a break
- Give Mom a chance to “see what it is like” – come to respite – try out the assisted living life.

Respite care – temporary

- Living with adult children – family needs a vacation – Mom can go to respite
- Living at home alone – family usually provides daily support – they need a vacation – Mom can go to respite
- Mom and Dad live at home – Dad needs surgery – Mom can't be alone – Mom can go to respite care

Memory Impairment Care: A Special Place

- What if Mom or Dad has memory changes?
 - Skilled assessment can determine the best setting
- Assisted Living can provide a safe environment for a forgetful loved one
- Stimulation that is good for them
- Activities designed specifically for the memory challenged



Planning

- This is not as much fun as planning a party or a vacation
- Save more heartache
- Proactive health maintenance of the cared for and the care giver
- If you don't plan, someone else will make the choices for you, probably in a crisis

How to Plan: Watch these signs:

- **Personal care.** *Is bathing, washing hair, or dressing becoming impossible to do?*
- **Homemaking.** *Do they need help with chores like housecleaning, grocery shopping, or laundry?*
- **Meals.** *Are they no longer cooking, or even getting nutritious food?*
- **Money management.** *Are they paying bills late or not at all?*
- **Health care.** *Forget to take medicine? Missing doctor appointments or treatments?*
- **Daily Activities.** *Is it harder to turn a door knob, get out of a chair, or put on socks? Are these changes causing simple inconvenience or possible harm?*
- **Getting around—at home and in town.** *Is he/she no longer driving or walking can't get to church or the MDs?*
- **Activities and friends.** *Is he/she spending most of their time alone?*
- **Safety.** *Are they falling? Are you worried about crime in the neighborhood, physical abuse, or losing money as a result of a scam?*