



# HELPING HANDS



## Difficult Conversations with the Elderly

(excerpts from AARP FAMILY CAREGIVING CARE GUIDES, Help for First-Time Caregivers)

### Start the Conversation

The right time to talk about the future is now—even if it's uncomfortable. Ask your loved one about their wishes, values and preferences on things that matter, from health to finances. If you wait until a fall, accident, or serious diagnosis, your choices may be more limited and more difficult to evaluate when everyone's stress levels are sky-high.



#### QUICK TIPS:

Look for an opening: Rather than bringing up a tough topic out of the blue, it can help to point to a newspaper story or a relevant comment as a conversation-starter. (Example: "You mentioned your eyes are bothering you. Is this causing problems with reading or driving?")

Keep trying: It can be hard for some people to admit they need help. If your first conversation doesn't go well, gently try again. If you are repeatedly shut out, consider asking another trusted family member, friend or doctor to approach them about your concerns.

Don't forget to talk about money: It's often at the heart of decisions you'll make as a caregiver. Respectfully ask them to review their bank accounts and health insurance so you can know how much is available to cover potential costs.

Listen to and respect your loved one's desires: The person you're caring for should always participate in discussions about their needs and plans for their future, to the extent that its possible.

Bring others into the conversation: Once you've started the discussion, you may wish to ask a few other people close to your loved one—family members or friends—to be part of the process. There may be conflicts, but don't be afraid to talk through them. Better now than in a time of crisis.

### Form a Team

Don't go it alone. Trying to handle the responsibilities of caregiving yourself can lead to burnout and stress-related health problems. It's important to reach out to form a larger network of friends, family, and community resources that can help you. Remember to consider your loved one part of the team.

#### QUICK TIPS:

Go deep and wide: Team members need not all live nearby or have huge blocks of time to be of value. Family or friends living at a distance with limited schedules can pitch in with meal organizing, bill paying, or financial assistance. The computer whiz in the family could set up an electronic calendar for dinner delivery or chores.

Decide who's in charge: It's important to have a point person to keep the process moving and make sure everyone on the team understands the plan and priorities. In most families, one person assumes the primary role because he or she lives nearby, has a close relationship, or simply is a take-charge person. That may be you.

Consider a mediator: It can be useful to engage an unrelated facilitator, such as a social worker or minister, to help keep everyone focused, manage potential disagreements and communicate difficult subjects when meeting with your team.





## Caregiver Self Care

(more excerpts from AARP FAMILY CAREGIVING CARE GUIDES, Common Caregiving Conflicts)

### Emotional Stress

As a family caregiver, it's easy to forget about your own needs — which is why caregivers are more likely to report high stress levels, depression and other health problems. Its imperative that you find some form of support and set aside time to address your own health issues, both mental and physical. And try not to feel guilty: You can't care well for others if you don't care for yourself.

**Join a support group.** Even when you love the person you're caring for, you may also feel darker emotions such as anger, resentment and grief. Many caregivers find great relief in sharing their feelings with other caregivers who've felt much the same way.

**Address depression.** If you feel sadness and anxiety that lasts for weeks at a time, are sleeping too little or too much or have other symptoms of depression, see a mental health professional. Depression is treatable; you needn't just suffer through it.

**Take time out.** Don't neglect exercise, sleep, healthy eating and activities that bring you pleasure. Maybe find a relative who can fill in to allow you a vacation, or even a quiet staycation. Otherwise look into options for respite care in your area.

## IAM Peer Employee Assistance Program



The heart and soul of the District 141 Employee Assistance Program is the local lodge EAP peer coordinator. These dedicated men and women volunteer their personal time to assist other union members and their families who are experiencing personal difficulties. EAP coordinators do not make clinical diagnoses or clinical evaluations, however, they are trained to make a basic assessment of your situation and refer you to an appropriate resource for a more detailed evaluation. EAP coordinators will follow up to ensure you have been able to access services that addressed the difficulty you were experiencing.

### IAM EAP Airline Chairmen

#### United Airlines

Kathy Ferguson: 703-505-4321, E-mail: [kf.borabora@cox.net](mailto:kf.borabora@cox.net)

#### American Airlines

Chris Davis: 704-572-4859, E-mail: [chrisx1959@yahoo.com](mailto:chrisx1959@yahoo.com)

#### Hawaiian Airlines

Meki Pei, mobile 808-208-5950, E-mail: [mekipei@gmail.com](mailto:mekipei@gmail.com)

## 2018 EAP Classes

William W. Winpisinger  
Education/Technology  
Center

### EAP III

June 24-29

### Labor Assistance

### Professionals Conference

Tropicana Hotel, Las Vegas

July 15-20

### EAP IV

September 16-21

### EAP I

September 30-October 5