

Helpful Hints

- Use respectful listening and keep an open mind. There will be differences in opinions, values, and relationships.
- Listen to the older family member. Talk directly to him/her and provide extra time for their response.
- 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.

*For more information on holding a family meeting, visit the Family Caregiver Alliance website:
www.caregiver.org*

Resources Are Available to Help You Care Well.

The Senior LinkAge® Line is a free phone service that offers you assistance with finding resources such as respite care, caregiver education and training, support groups, health insurance counseling, in-home services, chores, meals and transportation.

Call the Senior LinkAge Line® at:
1-800-333-2433

Find useful information and links to resources on the web at:
www.MinnesotaHelp.info™

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

Funded by a grant from the Administration on Aging's National Family Caregiver Support Program through the Minnesota Board on Aging.



Holding a Family Meeting



Recognizing your strengths in caring for family and friends





Holding a Family Meeting

- Are you concerned about a recent health change in your spouse, parent, 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 calling or 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, to 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 decisions while acknowledging and supporting the primary caregiver.

Before the Family Meeting

- Ask both the older adult and primary caregiver whom they want to attend. Consider all relevant family members and professionals.
- Pick a convenient date, time, and place. Arrange a conference call if possible for those who cannot attend.
- List issues to be discussed based on the goals of the older adult and primary caregiver.
 - Issues may include: help with household tasks, home safety, medical needs, caregiver stress and workload, end of life decisions, legal and financial management.
- Keep the agenda short so each issue receives full attention and to allow time to discuss next steps.
- Collect information that may be helpful such as medical reports or legal documents.
- Consider a professional (social worker, care coordinator or clergy member) to facilitate the meeting if needed.

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 the decisions to non-family members such as home care, physician, and others.
- Plan the next meeting if 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 a website.