I ILLINOIS Extension

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL, CONSUMER & ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Family and Consumer Sciences Family Life

Caregiving Relationships Tip Sheet:

Eldercare Services and Professionals: Maneuvering the Maze

"I have been told that I should use services and resources in my community. What is available? How do I find out what they are or choose among them?"

Eldercare Services and Professionals: How to Maneuver Through the Maze

If you are caring for a dependent adult, you may feel such emotions as denial, panic, and fear. With the many responsibilities that you face in your own life, you may find that there is no extra time for caregiving. This task becomes more difficult when there is geographic distance between the caregiver and the care receiver.

There is a network of senior services in most communities, but there is no one number to call to reach them. Tracking down resources and putting them into place can be very exhausting and frustrating for caregivers.

Steps in Selecting Community Resources

- Conduct an informal needs assessment. Get input from friends, family, and the care receiver about the barriers to independence that exist and the formal and informal supports that are used or could be used.
- Locate resources by contacting one of the agencies listed.
- Use a separate sheet of paper to record each agency's name, number, address, and the name and title of person spoken to for each contact made.
- Prepare a common list of questions and record the answers.

- When scheduling appointments, find out all documents that will be needed and prepare them ahead of time.
- Have one advocate or family representative assigned to handle each area of assistance needed. This helps avoid confusion.
- Keep all contact information current.
- Inform everyone who is involved with caring.

Important Factors to Consider

- The circumstances and wishes of the care receiver and your family. Be realistic about what care receivers and family members can do.
- The layout of the care receiver's home and the proximity to needed services.
- The care receiver's independence and autonomy. It is important that he feels empowered and a part of the decision making.
- The financial and legal aspects, which vary from state to state. Be familiar with the care receiver's legal and financial status before setting up services.
- Informal support systems. Do not underestimate the network of friends and church family.

University of Illinois * U.S. Department of Agriculture * Local Extension Councils Cooperating University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.

Local Agency Contacts

To-Do List

For more information, contact:

- Eldercare Locator
 1-800-677-1116
 Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Illinois Department on Aging 421 E. Capitol Ave.
 Springfield, IL 62701 1-800-252-8966
 - AARP 601 E. Street NW Washington, DC 20049 1-800-424-3410 www.aarp.org
- National Council on the Aging 409 3rd St.
 Washington, DC 20024 1-800-424-9046
- Your local Extension office

Written by:

Cheri Burcham, University of Illinois Extension Educator, Family Life

Developed from:

Infosource material prepared by University of Wisconsin Extension, 1997.

This tip sheet is part of a series:

Caregiving Relationships: For People Who Care for Adults

University of Illinois Extension, College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Information in this publication is for educational purposes only. References to commercial products or trade names do not constitute an endorsement and do not imply discrimination against similar products.

Issued in furtherance of cooperative Extension Service work, Acts of May 8 and June 20, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunity in programs and employment.

Copyright $\ensuremath{\mathbb{C}}$ 2001 by the University of Illinois Board of Trustees.

Authors and publishers have granted permission for copies of this work or parts of this work to be reproduced, provided that (1) copies are distributed at or below the cost of reproduction; (2) the author, the publication, and the University of Illinois College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences and the relevant division within the college are identified; and (3) proper notice of copyright is affixed to each copy.

Updated 2019