

## ADULT CHILDREN OFTEN SAY “I SHOULD HAVE COME SOONER!”

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As an Elder Care Consultant I often hear the words "I should have come to you sooner" during consultation with families. Many adult children are unaware that professionals and agencies like Elder Life Management exist to help address the many aging related concerns of an elderly parent.

When I met with Greg H. for a comprehensive consultation, he had just left his mother's home. Although he owned his own condo about 30 miles away, he had been spending many nights and weekends caring for his mother, usually coming directly from work each evening. His mother, Harriet had been hospitalized three times in the past two years. She had cardiac issues, survived bypass surgery and had previously recovered from a fractured hip. She also been rehabilitated on two

different occasions in two different local sub-acute nursing facilities.

With the help of some caring neighbors, Greg was able to "patch" together an informal network of help for his mother. His strategy was now unraveling and Greg was not only experiencing his own health problems, but his usually supportive wife was no longer feeling that this approach of caring for Mom could continue.

Every time Greg thought things had stabilized somewhat, another crisis occurred and they were not able to return to the previous routine. There was not a plan, either short term or long term for Harriet's care. Greg, his mother, his wife and his work were all responding to one crisis after another.

Greg was referred to Elder Life Management from a member of his church. Most people know when they need a doctor, lawyer, accountant or electrician. But seeking guidance from an elder care consultant is often not considered until one or several emergencies or incidents have occurred. A geriatric

care manager is licensed and certified to provide functional assessments and develop specific comprehensive care plans that meet the frail elder's and family needs. These professionals have expertise in knowing local resources, care-giving opportunities both public and privately funded, and can also project future Medicaid eligibility. These are all services that Elder Life Management can, and does, provide.

As Greg and I reviewed his mother's situation, he spoke of his attempts to obtain help prior to meeting with me. He toured three long-term care facilities and made countless calls to the county board of social services and office on aging. Each person he encountered offered him advice, but they were only able to provide recommendations based on their individual area of knowledge. This left Greg with some answers, but in reality, even more questions as to what were the best options for his mother.

A typical Baby Boomer, Greg went online and "for free" was able to get a list of local assisted

living facility for his mother, but his perception was that the options being provided must be linked to getting a "kickback" of some sort. He had questions regarding conflict of interest that paralyzed him into not making any decision. Actually, Greg said he had too much information and needed someone to assure him that he was advising his mother correctly, and making the right choices for and with her.

At the conclusion of the consultation, based on our discussion and Harriet's described needs, I was able to provide Greg with a comprehensive care plan. The first steps included obtaining at-home respite care for Harriet, allowing Greg to resume his work schedule and other activities with his wife and family.

I also arranged for Harriet and Greg to tour several assisted living facilities.

The family decided on a facility closer to where Greg lived that had many amenities and activities that Harriet enjoys. Most importantly, they will accept Harriet in the future when her Medicaid is approved.

Harriet has benefited from private homecare and respite-funded homecare while Elder Life Management continues to complete the Medicaid Application process

When I speak to Greg, he mentions how much the quality of life for Harriet and his entire family has improved --

Greg now understands the significant difference an Elder Care Consultant can make when orchestrating and providing care for a loved one. He is now able to spend his time caring for and about his mother, instead of coordinating care and providing "care giving."

As is the case with many of our referrals, Greg shares his Elder Life Management experience with others and always tells them "I should have come to them sooner!"