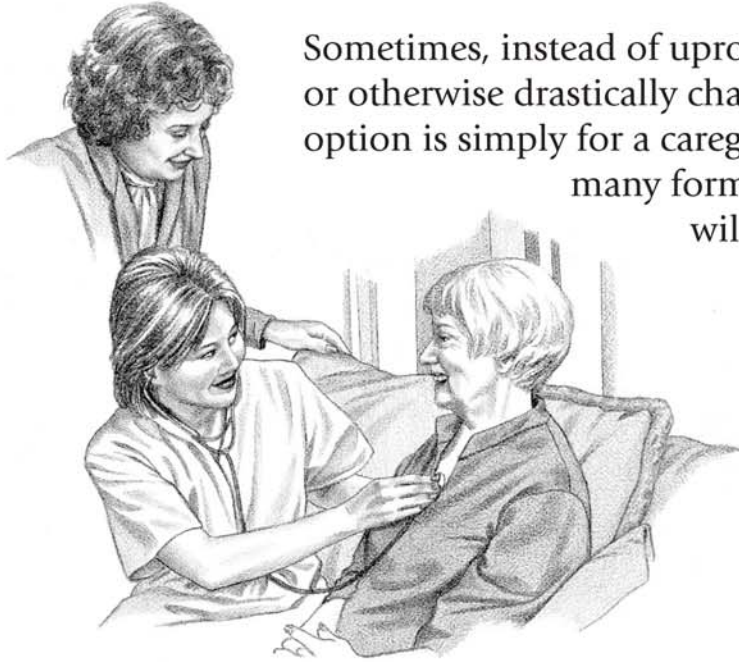


Help for the Caregiver



Sometimes, instead of uprooting a senior from his or her home or otherwise drastically changing living arrangements, the best option is simply for a caregiver to get help. This help can take many forms, depending on what the caregiver is willing and able to offer and what the senior needs.

The hardest part for a caregiver might be admitting your limitations. Don't be ashamed of what you can't do, or even what you don't want to do. You are only human; you're not a saint. It will be better for everyone involved if you honestly assess what you can do and what you need help with. Following are a few options you may want to consider; check to see which of these services are available in your community.

FRIENDS, FAMILY MEMBERS AND NEIGHBORS:

Contact everyone who might be able to help and ask them to commit to a particular task—or even just to visit once a week.

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES: Senior centers, hospitals, cities and private programs all administer a variety of transportation services—including vans, buses and chair lifts.

TELEPHONE REASSURANCE PROGRAMS: These volunteer programs have people call seniors regularly to check that everything is okay. They can then call you if there seems to be a problem.

HOME MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR SERVICES: These services, sometimes subsidized, specialize in helping seniors maintain and improve their homes.

SENIOR CENTERS: Often, senior centers serve meals, offer support groups and provide other means of socialization for seniors.

CARE MANAGER/SOCIAL WORKER: With training in gerontology, social work, nursing and/or counseling, these professionals can assess, manage and educate about a variety of care needs, including financial, legal and medical issues.

ADULT DAY CARE: These programs offer all day, morning, afternoon and sometimes evening care for seniors.

HOMEMAKING AND PERSONAL CARE SERVICES:

Provide assistance with homemaking (such as cooking and cleaning) and personal care (such as dressing and bathing).

HOME-DELIVERED MEALS (Meals-on-Wheels) programs:

Often run by the local senior center or nutrition program, home-delivered-meals programs provide meals, usually once a day, for very fair prices.

HOME OBSERVATION PROGRAMS (available from

utility companies and the post office): In these programs, people who visit the house regularly, to read the gas meter or deliver mail, are trained to notice if something doesn't look right and report it to the proper authorities.

HOME HEALTH CARE: Semi-skilled and skilled services are available, for a few hours a day or 24 hours a day, for people who need medical care at home.

RESPIRE SERVICES: These programs give caregivers a break—for a day, a week or a weekend—by taking in or caring for a senior for a specific period of time.