



PRIVATE DUTY  
HOME CARE

# CAREGIVER SUPPORT TOOL

## TIPS FOR DISCUSSING YOUR LOVED ONE'S CARE NEEDS

### Approaching the Difficult Subject that Your Loved One May Need Assistance

How do you help your loved one, who at one time was completely independent, understand and accept that they now need assistance without being perceived as interfering in their life? It's a fact that we will all be faced with these issues as we age. However, with some advance planning and straight-forward discussions, the problem-solving process can work well, but it will take some concentrated effort by you, other family members, and your loved one.

The first thing to know is that many of the conversations that you'll have will be emotionally laden and must be handled carefully. Here are some useful tips to consider when communicating with family members or a loved one when deciding whether or not to obtain assistance such as home care, adult day services, or other forms of care:

- Treat your loved one as an equal and involve them in making decisions (assuming that their mental capabilities exist).
- Have a clear topic for every discussion.
- If your loved one's health or safety are an issue, say so, and push the discussion forward.
- Voice your opinions using "when you".... "I feel".... "therefore I need you to" statements. For example, *"When I go to work, I'm nervous that you're going to fall and no one will be here to help you. I need you to really consider having someone help clean around the house, make sure you get meals, and at least check on you while I'm gone all day."*
- Be assertive about your thoughts and feelings.
- Be respectful of others' opinions.
- Don't blame others.
- Don't try to accomplish too much in one conversation.

.....and don't expect any of this to be easy.

Setting up a family meeting can be a great place to begin having these types of discussions. It may seem obvious, but remember that your loved one wants primary control for making choices about their own life, not you or one of your relatives (unless of course, there is a very serious health concern and your loved one is being quite unreasonable). Family meetings must be supportive, and this support alone may be enough to convince them that they should begin to consider some form of assistance before their health deteriorates further.