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Family caregivers overwhelmed and untrained

By Linda Fodrini-Johnson



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caregivers spend an average of 13 hours every month on researching resources or information on their family member's illness.

Thirteen hours of searching is a bunch of time looking for answers or resources. How do you make decisions about what service to use, or health care advice to follow? The internet seems to be the first place that families search. What pops up first in your search are all the organizations or services that have paid ads. Then as you move down to the organic results of your exploring, you find organizations that provide the service or advice you are seeking, as they have not just purchased a keyword that sends anyone who puts dementia (for example) into the search bar. It might be exactly what you have been looking for but, nine times out of 10, those listed first are a related service and not the "expert" you were hoping to find.

A few tips in searching for "Senior or Elder" care services on the internet:

- 1) Has the company been in business for more than five years?
- 2) Are they led by professionals related to what you need for your family members?
- 3) Do they take referral fees from places they might find for you, possibly compromising objectivity?
- 4) Do the professionals that work for the company belong to a profession that has a Code of Ethics and a Standard of Practice?
- 5) Do they give back to the community - with education, donations or volunteerism?
- 6) Do they have liability insurance? Bonding is extremely limited in its application - you want to be sure they have a good general liability policy.
- 7) If you were not referred by another professional, can you talk to one of their current clients?
- 8) How do they support the entire family - education, support groups, counseling?

If you want to save a lot of time and headaches in searching for services, schedule an appointment with a skilled and experienced, aging life care manager with backgrounds in social work, counseling, nursing and related fields. Turn your feelings of being overwhelmed into peace of mind with excellent navigation from an expert that only works for you and will be unbiased in their advice and direction.

Take classes and educate yourself. Eldercare Services offers a series of classes that run all year long for

An AARP study published in 2015 states that family caregivers are overwhelmed and untrained. Can you relate to this? There are about 40 million family caregivers over the age of 55 who are giving an average of 30 hours a week to this task. It is almost a full-time job and many of these caregivers are still in the workforce, so they are doing two full-time jobs. Is that you?

Of these families, 15 million are trying to provide care to someone with a dementia, such as Alzheimer's or Lewy body dementia, resulting in an even larger time commitment. Often that person needs 24/7 attention because of safety and impaired judgment.

It is an understatement of the real stress that is on families to say that it is challenging to protect the safety of someone who doesn't think that help is needed and is fighting every suggestion. Family members would benefit immensely by seeking training and learning tips on communicating with someone who has a dementia.

Recent caregiver research says that caregivers spend about 25 percent of their time on items like shopping, appointments, cooking, assisting with personal care, helping with daily money management and a variety of other things like home repair or assisting with technology issues. However, what struck me was that

those dealing with the dementias, in addition to a monthly support group and a third Friday of the month lecture series on a variety of senior issues. We can also help you find someone just like us anywhere in the country through our national network and/or our professional care management organization. For information, visit www.eldercareanswers.com.

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