



Your Aging Parents' Issues Surface During the Holidays

Baby boomers visiting aging parents during the holidays may be in for a shocking surprise. The pristine house and yard of the past now look shabby and neglected. Dirty dishes fill the sink and the kitchen table is covered in crumbs. Unopened bills are stacked haphazardly all over the countertops. Mom seems unfocused and Dad is having trouble getting around. It's clear that help is needed but what should family members do?

Nicole L. Hawkins, Certified Senior Advisor and Medicaid advocate encourages clients to take advantage of the time when everyone is gathered together to initiate a conversation with parents and family members about "what if" scenarios and health and financial concerns.

Eldercare Link, one of the nation's leading free eldercare referral services agrees. CEO Robert Brooks says that historically, the week after Thanksgiving generates more requests from anxious family members than any other week of the year.

The holidays are a good time for family members to be alert for signs that elderly relatives may need help - physical, mental or financial. The most important thing is to look for signs of change in mood, health and living conditions. Checking in with people who visit the relative frequently can indicate whether there have been recent changes.

Some signs to look for include:

- Personal hygiene problems
- Home in disarray or needing to be cleaned
- Weight loss or weight gain - check for spoiled food or insufficient food at home
- Failure to manage medications or medical appointments
- Increased difficulty with mobility (such as climbing stairs or using a bathtub)
- Changes in judgment, mood or overall behavior
- Increased forgetfulness-check for unopened mail or unread newspapers
- Missed bill payments or other financial difficulties
- Unusual or extravagant purchases that are out of character
- Decreased social activities or failing to maintain friendships



Experts warn that it isn't necessary to panic if you recognize a few changes. Some are simply part of the aging process. Slowing down does not automatically mean that your parents are ready move to an assisted living facility or in with you.

This is a good time to talk about concerns and ask parents what kind of help they would like. Start researching the options. Here at Elder Advantage can provide expert advice about a range of senior services ranging from home health aides,

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