

## Helping Senior Parents – Do it Yourself or Call a Professional?

By Marty Seigel, CSA, Certified Senior Advisor

We always figured it out ourselves. That's how the "boomer" generation staked its claim as the most idealistic, independent, and accomplished generation of our time. Now, an entire generation of "adult kids," is facing its greatest familial challenge – caring for Mom & Dad in their golden years.

Do I take this on by myself or call a professional Geriatric Care Manager? Ask yourself three questions when making this decision:

- How quickly is the situation changing medically, emotionally, and with daily living?
- What information & resources are available to help me?
- How much time is required and available in my schedule?

A fourth factor – distance – has a compounding effect on the other three.

### Leveraging the Internet

With internet expertise abounding, some families logically conclude that there is sufficient information on social & medical resources to "do it yourself." A professional Care Manager helps a family assimilate the wealth of information available and cuts to the chase. Through an in-person assessment, they determine what resources are needed and assist the family with first-hand knowledge to make the right choices. The professional Care Manager brings an understanding of the care continuum and local resources providing options of which the layperson is unaware.

### Advantage of a Third Party Professional

Many elder clients resist the involvement of an adult child in their health and living affairs. This point of resistance may be the best time to introduce the services of a third party professional, soothing the potential negative perception of a child "parenting their parent." Many times a parent will more openly share their feelings of concern with a credentialed expert in the field.

### Make an Educated Decision

Finally, it is important to note that the term GCM - Geriatric Care Manager - is a generic term, not a professional designation. It is important to look beyond a care manager's title and understand their professional credentials. When dealing with geriatric psycho-social issues, a social worker or RN with formal psychiatric training may be best prepared to assist. When faced with complex medical issues such as stroke or increasing dementia, the family may want to consider a professional with medical & neurological experience.

*Marty Seigel is Director of Advocare Care Management. Their team of professional credentialed Care Managers service Palm Beach, Broward, and Miami-Dade counties. Advocare can be reached at the numbers below and on their website at [www.caremanage.com](http://www.caremanage.com).*

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