



I Will Never Put My...(spouse, father, mother) In A Nursing Home.

Never make a promise you cannot keep. I always cringe when I hear someone say, “*I will never put my... (spouse, father, mother) in a nursing home.*”

Sure, it is ideal to think that we can provide the needed care that our loved ones require, but we also have to be realistic. Whether you are providing 24 hour care or helping a few hours a week, caregiving is a very challenging task. If your desire is to keep your loved ones safe and meet their needs, follow these simple steps in order to make your efforts a success:

1. Make a list of your loved one's daily and weekly needs - Prepare a plan of how these needs will be met. For example, if your loved one needs help with medication management, you should set up a pill planner each week and then make a reminder call to them when he or she should take the medications.

2. Don't assume total dependence – One of the biggest mistakes caregivers make is assuming their loved one cannot do anything on his or her own. If your loved one can tie his own shoes, let him. Remember when the kids were little and you thought it would be easier to do the task yourself, rather than wait for them to do it? Yes, it does take patience, but give your loved one the dignity of being as independent as possible.

3. Don't be a martyr – Use available community services. Most health insurances provide short-term in-home skilled care, such as nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and home health aides. In addition, there are local agencies that provide long-term in-home services to aid caregivers in providing care.

4. Accept the offer of help – When family members or friends offer to help, take them up on it. It not only helps you, but it also makes them feel good that they can do something.

5. Plan a break – In order for caregivers not to burn out, they must plan a break from care. This should be scheduled weekly, maybe take an afternoon or a whole day off. Taking a week off once in awhile is also a great idea. Some non-skilled caregiving agencies provide 24-hour respite. In addition, assisted living facilities and nursing homes welcome short-term respite admissions.

6. Remember to have fun – It can be emotionally difficult for loved ones to rely on others to meet their needs. They may feel guilty and frustrated about their inability to meet their own needs. It is important to find things they can do that are enjoyable. For example, take them to the mall to go shopping, go out to lunch, play a game, etc.

7. Contact an Elder Law Attorney about available benefits, along with information regarding Estate Planning and Nursing Homes. Navigating the system can be overwhelming and confusing. There are a variety of benefits available to help care for a loved one in the community and to pay for nursing home care. An experienced Elder Law Attorney will be knowledgeable about these benefits and can assist you in developing a plan to meet your needs.

8. Using a nursing home when needed – Nursing homes are there to help you care for your loved one. If you cannot emotionally or physically continue to provide care, use a nursing home. There is a reason the nursing home staffs 3 shifts. When nursing home care is needed, you can change your role back to spouse or child instead of caregiver.

We are here to help you no matter where you are in your caregiving journey.

