

Caregiving Just Happened. Now What?

Caregiving can happen with a sudden BAM. A diagnosis, accident, hospital discharge or unexpected change can leave you managing your own life and someone else's with little notice. You do not need to solve everything today. Use this checklist to identify what matters now, what can wait and where you may need help.

FIRST, CHECK WHAT IS URGENT

- ☐ Is the person safe where they are right now?
- ☐ Do they have the medications, food, mobility aids and personal care supplies they need today?
- ☐ Do I understand their immediate care instructions?
- ☐ Do I know whom to call if their condition changes?
- ☐ Is there anything that could cause an immediate risk, such as a fall, missed medication, wandering, fire hazard or lack of supervision?
- ☐ Do I need another person here to help right now?

EMERGENCY NOTE: If someone is in immediate danger, call 911. If you or someone you know is thinking about suicide or needs crisis support in Canada, call or text 988. Caregiver Corner is not an emergency or crisis service.

GATHER THE BASICS

- ☐ Full name, date of birth and address
- ☐ Health card and other identification
- ☐ Current medication list, doses and pharmacy
- ☐ Allergies and important medical conditions
- ☐ Primary healthcare provider and specialists
- ☐ Emergency contacts
- ☐ Upcoming appointments
- ☐ Hospital discharge papers or care instructions
- ☐ Insurance, benefit or home-care information
- ☐ Daily routines that cannot be missed

The most important thing I need to remember today:

KNOW WHO CAN MAKE DECISIONS

- ☐ Do I know what the person wants?
- ☐ Can they make and communicate their own decisions?
- ☐ Is there a Power of Attorney or other decision-making document?
- ☐ Do healthcare providers have permission to speak with me?
- ☐ Do I know where important documents are kept?
- ☐ Do I need legal, medical or financial guidance from a qualified professional?

Do not assume that being a spouse, child, relative or caregiver automatically gives you legal authority. Ask a qualified professional when you are unsure.

DECIDE WHAT CAN WAIT

Needs attention soon

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

Can wait

- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____
- ☐ _____

DO NOT CARRY IT ALL ALONE

People often say, 'Let me know if you need anything.' Give them something specific.

- ☐ Bring or prepare a meal
- ☐ Pick up groceries, medication or supplies
- ☐ Provide transportation
- ☐ Sit with the person while I rest or attend an appointment
- ☐ Make phone calls or gather information
- ☐ Help with children, pets, laundry or household tasks
- ☐ Attend an appointment and take notes
- ☐ Check in with me regularly
- ☐ Other: _____

The person I can contact today:

BEFORE THE DAY ENDS

- ☐ I ate something and drank water.
- ☐ I took my own medication.
- ☐ I told someone what is happening.
- ☐ I wrote down the next important step.
- ☐ I accepted that not everything will be solved today.

You are allowed to take this one decision, one phone call and one day at a time.

This resource provides general information only. It is not medical, legal, financial or emergency advice and does not replace guidance from qualified professionals. Caregiver Corner does not provide care, assess needs or decide which services are appropriate.

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