

# Possible Situations for Family Caregivers



Some caregivers, willingly or unwillingly, fail to provide the level of care necessary to nurture loved ones at home. Here are some of the problems that derive from unprepared or overloaded caregivers.

## Caregiver Neglect.

If the caregiver can spend only minimal time in the morning and evening and will be absent the rest of the day, those receiving care quite often become imprisoned by their environment. They receive little or no social stimulus and may spend day after day just sleeping or watching television. They typically get no exercise other than moving to or from the bathroom and often they suffer from poor nutrition and dehydration due to lack of adequate food

and fluid intake.

Drinking and eating are deliberately avoided to lessen trips to the bathroom or to avoid soiling a diaper. Malnutrition and dehydration often result in poor mental reasoning or stupor, thus contributing to the daily routine of only sitting, sleeping and enduring the TV.

This is not a noble way to finish one's life. Harried caregivers are doing these people an injustice by keeping them imprisoned in this manner at home. Care recipients should either be in a good adult day services center or in a stimulating environment of an assisted living facility or the family should sacrifice, spend money and bring in full-time aides to provide more adequate care.

## Self-Neglect

Self-neglect is where the care recipient is not interested enough or is incapable of taking care of his or her own needs. This may mean not eating or drinking enough or not attending to personal hygiene. It may mean allowing garbage to accumulate in the home or having pets that are unattended leaving feces and urine in living spaces.

There may be a caregiver involved but for whatever reason the caregiver is not stimulating that

person receiving care to take care of him or herself or the home environment. And for whatever reason the caregiver is not providing needed help. Self-neglect with or without a caregiver is actually a form of elder abuse and in some states it is required by law that its existence be reported. A caregiver allowing this to happen could be criminally charged.

## Failure to Bring in Help

This is probably the biggest mistake caregivers make. Perhaps, in order to save money to use when the loved one is gone or because they think they are "tough" many caregivers will not ask for help. Or it is common for caregivers to become so involved with their loved one that they isolate themselves from others. This isolation makes them reluctant to contact those who can help. Or a child may try to provide care from a long distance away and find it difficult or impossible to do. Regardless of the cause, failure to ask for help or to hire help can have dire consequences on the welfare of the care recipient and the caregiver.

If you are a caregiver please do not allow yourself to fall into the situations described above. Seek help or training or involve other members of the family if you are overburdened.