

# Do you need a little help?

Elder care consultants can help people plan ahead ...

*Although the situation is factual and the circumstances accurate, we at Help's Here! have changed the names for privacy issues and respect to those involved.*

**Jane and Charlie celebrated their 48th wedding anniversary** a few months ago. They have continued to live in their two-story family home and seemed to be managing fairly well. Charlie was still driving and both had remained active with volunteer work, attending lectures, other day-to-day activities and occasional babysitting of their grandchildren. When visiting one afternoon, their daughter, Claire, noticed that their car had a broken taillight and a large dent in the bumper. She asked her father about it and he said he didn't know what had happened. Later that day, Claire's mother called her and said that Charlie had been out shopping and had returned home very upset. He had backed into a pole in the shopping centre. She also shared that he had had several 'near misses' and she was worried that his reflexes when driving, were slowing down.

Jane also indicated that he kept forgetting grocery items and had missed picking her up from the hairdresser earlier that week. She was worried

that something wasn't right, and confided this concern to her daughter.

Many individuals can tell a similar story. The details differ but the theme is the same - concern about a spouse or a parent who is becoming increasingly forgetful and whose

## Questions to ask when hiring an Elder Care Manager

1. What are your professional credentials?
2. Are you a member of a professional college?
3. How long have you been providing care management services?
4. Are you available for emergencies?
5. What other services does your company provide?
6. How do you communicate information to me?
7. What are your fees?
8. Can you provide me with references?

*(Modified from the National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers.*

driving abilities seem to be 'not quite the same'.

Claire called an Elder Care Consultant (ECC) because she and her mother noticed a gradual change that had them wondering if Charlie could continue to safely drive and whether his forgetfulness was a 'normal' part of aging or something else. Claire called to discuss her concerns with an ECC before there was a serious accident.

Throughout this process and in advance of a crisis, many families find it helpful to contact a professional ECC experienced in senior care issues. They can assess, advise, recommend, access, coordinate, deliver and follow up on services that are needed to either maintain an individual in their own home or review options that are appropriate as next steps. As well, they will know all of the services in the community, the cost and quality, and how to make the link. This will save family members who live at a distance, time, money and worry.

An ECC represents the older adult and their needs to service and health care providers in a consistent and reliable manner, saving time and preventing miscommunication. They do this in consultation with every concerned family member. The ECC is there to ensure that your family member does not fall through the system.

Charlie, in this situation, had an appointment made for him to see his family doctor. It was suggested that

they discuss a referral to a gerontologist. Charlie was prescribed a new medication by this doctor and had some further medical investigations. A driving assessment was recommended to determine if he was safe to drive. Some other resources were also identified for him.

There are other times when it is helpful to call for ECC assistance.

*An ECC can assess, advise, recommend, access, coordinate, deliver and follow up on services...*

Perhaps you live in one area and your relative lives in another so it becomes difficult for you to look in on them as regularly as you would like to assess what is happening. Or you feel like your caregiving responsibilities are beginning to overwhelm the rest of your life, causing stress and impacting your performance at work. Another reason may be that the family is at odds over what to do about an aging parent and would benefit from the recommendations of an objective professional.

*Consulting with an Elder Care Consultant can save you time, money and worry.*

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