

Tips for Successful Eldercare Family Meetings

- Start with immediate family then add extended family and friends for subsequent meetings if this would be helpful. Include the elder person in the meeting if at all possible.
- Make sure you can hear each other – literally, reduce background noise, turn off the TV, check to see what has been heard through review, summary, etc.
- Consider large print or recorded material if resources or other written materials need to be reviewed together.
- Have ground rules such as agreeing to talk with the whole group together rather than member to member outside the meeting, can call time out if necessary, be polite and respectful of each other, no walking out.
- Stay focused on the purpose: “helping the parent maintain independent living as long as possible” or “developing a plan of care” or “planning for facility based care,” etc. Don’t wander into past hurts or past promises. It is a new day with new questions to consider. Eldercare is a process that changes over time and new plans and decisions come up.
- Respect each other’s opinions and listen to each other, especially to the elder person. Different opinions can be respected.
- Create an agenda and use it to stay on task.
- Identify someone to take notes and share them with everyone. Ensure that your elder can read the copy he/she is given. This can be used later to remind people of their agreements, responsibilities, and commitments.
- Consider a neutral 3rd party or professional to facilitate the meeting.



Caregiver Tips:

- 1) DO NOT MAKE PROMISES as you don’t know if you can keep them.
- 2) As a caregiver – remember you have other people in your life that also need you – keep some balance.
- 3) Don’t try to do this alone – turn to others for support, physical help, sharing of responsibilities – nobody likes a martyr.
- 4) Acknowledge and talk about the fears (yours and theirs) with your elders and other family members, i.e. “not sure I can do this”, “not sure you want to do this”, “don’t want to be a burden”, “don’t want to lose my self and my other interests in the process of caregiving”, “what if I hate facility based care?” etc.
- 5) Don’t infantilize your parent or leave them out of the process. You wouldn’t like it if they left you out of the process.
- 6) Remember they are adults and have rights. Listen and try to put yourself in their shoes – really.
- 7) Don’t takeover – unless there is a serious risk of harm but if so, don’t hesitate to step in.
- 8) Set limits for yourself and stick to them in a positive, pleasant manner. These limits can include: coming over only once/week, identifying which tasks you will complete and which ones need to be paid for, etc.