

Arranging for services: How do I select a caregiver or nurse?

Trust and compatibility are paramount. It is not uncommon for older adults to be unwilling to accept care, or to begrudge the assistance offered by family or paid caregivers. The secret to success is diligent persistence.

Unfortunately, a small percentage of older adults will never be fully accepting of services. Due to personal pride, frugality, denial and dementia, a certain percentage of older adults will have difficulties with "strangers" providing help in the home.

A caregiver or nurse should be selected based on how his or her skill level will meet the care and psychosocial needs of the older adult. What at first may seem like an awkward and less than effective match may actually blossom into the perfect relationship. Personality, communication skills, reliability and common-sense skills are also critical. If the older adult is not declining the help and yet the relationship is unusually tense, it may be that the personalities will never blend and a new caregiver is needed.

Seniors have to be encouraged and told that the initial arrangements or care and support are for a limited period of time. If older adults feel that the arrangement of such services can be changed or altered in the future, it may be easier for family and friends to convince the senior to be accepting of the services. Having compatible personalities is of equal importance as having mutual respect and trust. Respect and trust take time to develop. Compatibility of personalities can be recognized with a shorter period of time - typically within a week; whereas trust may take a month or two to fully develop.

If, after 60 days, a level of trust and mutual respect has not been achieved, then a change of provider may be due.

If an older adult is excessively critical or not willing to accept care, a medical professional's help may be necessary. Physicians, ARNPs, therapists, social workers, nurses, and mental health professionals may be needed to convince an older adult to become accepting of care and attention. Or, there may be an underlying health or mental reason making this transition difficult.

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