

The advantages of home care for the elderly

[Sociology](#), [Population](#)



A report published by the US Census Bureau projects the American elderly population (aged 65 years and above) to rise to over 80 million by 2030. Age comes with its fair share of challenges; 69% of this population has some kind of disability, ranging from cognitive disability, the physical impairment to poor health. As might be expected, 32% of the upper strata (85 years and above) suffer from moderate to severe memory impairment, specialized medical attention notwithstanding. According to the Government report, the elderly population (which stands at a paltry 15%) accounted for 38% of emergency medical responses and 90% of all nursing home use.

Simply put, the needs of older people are expected to stretch the healthcare workforce if urgent mitigation measures are not put in place. At least 35% of the elderly are in the nursing homes. But the turbulent economic situations and dwindling financial fortunes have not been kind to the nursing homes either.

Most nursing homes had to adjust accordingly to stay afloat, which means the elderly people who end up here had to make do with a lean staff and poor meals and untrained staff. These factors coupled up with reported cases of neglect and abuse has seen more people keeping the elderly in their own homes. The pertinent question many readers have been asking is, “ can I take care of the elderly in my own home?” This article will not only answer that question, it will also highlight the advantages of home care for the elderly.

Tips for caring for the elderly at home

Earn their trust -The elderly can only open up to you if you've earned their trust. Be genuinely interested in their welfare, ask how their day was and call whenever you're away. Occasionally you can surprise them with a gift card or anything they might like.

Communicate clearly - It's not uncommon to for an elderly patient to suffer from hearing impairment. Be patient with them and make sure you understand and respond to all their queries/concerns. Knowing what's good for them should not robbing someone of their voice and choice.

You must be reliable and dependable. Elderly people can be easily irritated if feel that they're being taken for granted. Keep time and anticipate their needs when around them.

Don't argue with the elderly. Misunderstandings happen but your primary role as a caregiver is to make them feel valued. You can try diffusing the situation through distractions or correcting them when they've calmed down.

Respect their privacy and confidentiality. A caregiver must maintain the trust of the patient and the family. Any information shared in confidence must remain so, especially if it will fan the flames of animosity.

Ensure that their rights are not breached. An elderly person can succumb to the Stockholm syndrome and consequently, fail to report mistreatment or abuse for the fear that they might be misunderstood to be " difficult."

Do not compromise the dignity of the elderly in the event they're unable to bathe or clean after themselves. The fact that they cannot accomplish these once simple chores is enough humiliation. Don't rub it in.

Be person-centered. Among the weaknesses of a nursing home is the lack of specialized attention. What is blissful for one can be irritating to the other. Find out the small things that put a smile on his/her face.

Taking care of the elderly in your home

Caring for the elderly at home is almost akin to having a toddler in the house. Besides the need to monitor their movements, modifications might become necessary to ease movement and make them more comfortable.

Considerations that should be put in place include:

Bring their souvenirs with them - Nostalgia is a very powerful emotion. The elderly will be attached to their previous surrounding so help them settle faster by creating a replica of it. Include their favorite books, furniture and anything else they would like. These are souvenirs which help them recall the memories of a point in time.

Modify the house to accommodate them. The elderly are known to be frail. Stairways should now include grab bars and railings for support. Get rid of any obstacles that can hamper movement or cause them to fall. Install fall detection and include a shower chair in the bathroom.

To ward off any feelings of loneliness and reduce anxiety, ensure continuity of his previous life. Let them call or invite their friends occasionally,

participate in their favorite sport or have them join an elderly social community within the area.

Dementia is usually among the challenges facing the elderly. Step in and ensure the bills are paid on time and correctly. Safeguard their legal documents and get all the details of their healthcare planning and insurance.

Be their financial advisor. The elderly cannot wrap their minds around scams or cybercrime. Guide them in their every move to avoid fraud or abuse.

Benefits of elderly living at home

Home care allows for personalized, one to one attention. They are guaranteed undivided attention and top-notch services. More importantly, they're not subjected to strict routines common in nursing homes.

Loneliness is a big challenge for the elderly. By having family members around, the elderly can cope and respond better to the challenges of old age. Companionship is very important in this phase.

It helps combat dementia and maintains sleep quality. When someone has stayed in one place for decades, their lives will be built around it. In essence, this is their "natural habitat". Moving them elsewhere will make them homesick, accelerate memory loss and be a source of confusion.

As a family, you will avoid the emotional burden of having to wonder whether your parents' dignity is being upheld, their safety and happiness. You will be able to live a guilt-free, without a sense of loss. It strengthens family bonds.

Home care will not put a strain on your finances. The fact that you can save several bucks a month, is in itself, an incentive for keeping the elderly at home.

You will be giving them what they want. The fear of the unknown makes the elderly reluctant to leave the comfort of their surroundings. They only leave as the last resort.

Studies indicate that over 80% of all seniors prefer to age in their own homes. The elderly would rather die than lose their independence. Home care allows them that independence and confidence that they're in control, however small it might be.

Aging and family relationships

In times of distress and sickness, only a strong bond can keep a family together. As mentioned earlier, 80% of all seniors would rather age at home. Family support for the elderly will be vital in helping seniors stay in their homes. If a family enjoys a strong bond, they'll be able to come up with a flexible schedule that can accommodate all members and enable everyone to play a role. In old age, senior care more for your presence and love over other pleasantries that life can offer. Aging presents the ultimate litmus test for family relationships. If family members avoid responsibility, the strain might be too much for one individual to bear. In a nutshell, aging presents a challenge to both the family and the individual. As indicated by studies, the elderly fear to depend on other people more than dying. Family members have a responsibility of easing the burden of guilt or self-pity which can

manifest itself in their actions or words. They are not supposed to feel like they are slowing down your lives or being a burden a burden to anyone.

Family plays a critical role in this transitional phase because they constitute his environment. Among the fears of the elderly is being alienated, having a serious illness, disability and weakening of neighborhood connections. No one wants to be forgotten. This can be further exacerbated by children who might be working in faraway states or countries or the death of a spouse, which can be the biggest blow. Thus an environment like this will be counterproductive to any efforts being made to slow down the effects of aging.

Conversely, when close family ties will ensure that their financial obligations are met, their medication addressed and respect accorded. This is more important to the elderly than to us; it gives them a sense of belonging, having someone to talk. The high emotional value cannot be quantified but it has been proved to slow down memory loss, help them recover faster from illnesses as well as remaining cheerful and upbeat.

Why Should we take care of the elderly?

This sounds like a rhetorical question, yet our role here cannot be overstated. Life has two critical phases; the infant phase and the old age phase. Old age is especially hard given that it's something that gradually develops and there's little you can do about it. Chronic health issues and disability occurs at the elderly age. Our parents will need help almost in anything if they're to keep going. Our presence ensures that they've taken medication, are taking regular baths and not taking a can of soup for supper.

Taking care of our parents is not a debt to be repaid, it is not a debate; it is a duty that shouldn't be delegated.

Reasons to take care of the elderly include:

They love us unconditionally. Our parents are the only people will always be there for us in our entire lives. We don't have to act some way to earn their love. We always have a special place in their hearts even if we turn out to be criminals. Their love will always be there.

You are where you are today because of the sacrifices your parents made for you. They can put their lives on the line to safeguard your interests. That includes giving up on pleasantries of life to give you a decent education, working in risky environments, etc.

Some people neglect this responsibility because they have bitter memories of the past. Put your bitterness aside and seize the opportunity to set an example for the future generations.

For their blessings. The greatest legacy a parent can leave behind is blessed children. Blessed children excel in all their endeavors.

We learned from them. Our parents were our first teachers. Our core principles, our morals, and values in life are hinged on the lessons we learned from them as children. They taught us to differentiate right from wrong. It's from our parents only that we can learn both the practical and the theoretical knowledge.

They gave us life. They didn't have to, but they did.

Irrespective of whatever they did or didn't do, they are still your parents. Nothing you do will ever change that fact.

They don't want it, they need it. They're beyond that point where your help is optional. Please step in and help them enjoy the last days of their lives.

It is what any noble human should do. Virtue is its own reward.

Conclusion

Life is like a bell curve; the beginning resembles the end. There no greater duty to parents or to self than to be there for them during old age. Our parents gave us life, and we're probably where we are today because of them. Giving up a parent to a nursing home is as heart-wrenching as handing over handing over your beloved child for adoption. Our hearts go out to them and our lives might be filled with quilt. Yet with elderly, we have an option. Caring for elderly parents at home benefits both the individual and the caregiver. Even if your childhood was filled with bitter memories, this still remains the only right thing to do. Use it as an opportunity to have a beautiful ending.