

A Family Guide for Understanding the Needs of Senior Loved Ones



Cognitive Assessment:

Yes No

- Is s/he showing any signs of confusion, disorientation or isolation?
- Is s/he no longer up on the news?
- Does s/he have difficulty calling you and/or friends by name?
- Does s/he show signs of a personality change with mood swings or forgetfulness, unnatural loneliness or sadness?
- Does s/he show disinterest in staying in touch with friends and relatives?
- Does s/he no longer discuss or have future plans and goals?
- Has s/he discontinued with outside activities?
- Do you think s/he is no longer in command

of taking prescriptions on time and as directed?

- Is s/he late paying bills and can no longer maintain the checkbook correctly?**
- Has s/he lost good reasoning ability with every day decisions?**
- Has s/he had automobile accidents or shows signs of inability to drive safely?**

Answers in the “yes” boxes mean that your loved one has or may have cognitive health issues that need to be addressed with further medical diagnosis and possible assistance with (additional) in-home care or family support.

Medical Assessment:

- Has s/he been diagnosed with a chronic illness such as diabetes, high blood pressure, arthritis, heart disease, or emphysema?**
- Has s/he lost or gained excessive weight?**
- Is his/her speaking and communicating ability an issue?**
- Is there increased fatigue or lack of energy?**
- Does s/he have vision and/or hearing loss?**
- Does s/he have diverse prescription drugs that need to be checked for compatibility?**
- Does s/he need help with personal care such as bathing and dressing?**
- Does s/he need help in getting to and from the bathroom or managing incontinence?**
- Does s/he need help walking, or is s/he not using a**

- cane or walker as often as needed?
- Does s/he require help getting in/out of a chair?
 - Has his/her skin lost its soft/supple normal skin color?
 - Is there any unusual tearing or bruising of the skin?
 - Has s/he lost interest in or has inability for proper grooming with hair, nails, clothing, make-up?
 - Are there concerns with care of teeth such as daily cleaning and care?
 - Has there been a frequency of health or home emergencies?
 - Has s/he had any falls in the past year?

Answers in the “yes” boxes mean that your loved one probably needs a medical review with the primary physician and/or other specialized doctors. Additional assistance with daily living activities and personal care are probably necessary.

Social Support Assessment:

- Has s/he kept interest in his/her favorite hobbies?
- Has s/he kept up regular visits with his/her friends?
- Does s/he go to church activities, the senior center and on other outings?
- Does s/he read books, magazines, as typical?
- Do family members and friends take him/her on outings often?
- Does s/he have favorite TV shows that are

regularly watched?

- Does s/he play a musical instrument as before?
- Is s/he still engaged in activities that have been enjoyed in the past?

Answers in the “no” boxes mean that your loved one has lost some degree of connectivity with friends, community and church.

Home Environment, Health and Safety Assessment:

- Can s/he respond to a home emergency and get out safely in case of a fire, etc.?
- Can s/he safely avoid telephone and door to door fraud?
- Can s/he maintain the home, manage such as the stove safely and keep walking areas clear of clutter for fall prevention?
- Is s/he able to cook independently with nutritious choices?
- Does s/he eat regular, balanced meals with adequate fluid intake?
- Does s/he exercise regularly?
- Is s/he able to do the laundry?
- Can s/he (or does s/he have someone available to) assure sanitation and infection control within the home environment?
- Does s/he have an emergency caller system or cell phone available for personal health emergencies?

Answers in the “no” boxes mean that safety and health concerns are or may become serious and need to be addressed by the family and your

loved one. Additional in-home assistance by family and/or a care agency is probably necessary. A medical review is probably necessary.

Spiritual Well Being Assessment:

Assessing the spiritual well-being of your loved one can help play a significant role in their health, their happiness, and their longevity. There are more than 20 clinical research studies that demonstrate a clear and proven link between strong faith and healthy outcomes. These studies all say that a spiritual well-being:

- Reduces depression and loneliness
- Increases social contacts
- Cuts hospital stays by more than half
- Produces better outcomes after surgery and other medical procedures
- Lowers their risk of high blood pressure by 40% or more
- Extends their life by seven years or more
- Gives more purpose to their life
- Encourages exercise and healthy life choices

(You can see a review of these clinical studies at www.nihr.org, the website for the International Center for the Integration of Health and Spirituality.)

While assessing your loved one's spiritual health, it's important to understand that your assessment is not a judgment on your loved one's heart before the Lord. That is between your loved one and God.

However, the Bible does give some direction on how to assess your loved one's spiritual well-being. And this direction can help you encourage your loved one's focus on spiritual matters. It also can give you some great insight into how to minister to your loved one.

Here are the assessment tools the Bible gives you:

Yes No

- Does s/he have a love for the Bible?**
If yes, spend time with your loved one reading the Bible.
- Does s/he love to sing hymns, psalms, and other spiritual songs?**
If yes, ask them what songs they like to sing and sing with them. Consider buying them a CD with those songs.
- Does s/he enjoy spending time with people at church?**
If yes, help them keep track of their social schedule and take them to those events. If they are unable to get out, encourage friends and others from their church to visit.
- Does s/he go to church regularly?**
If yes, help them go and consider going with them.
- Does s/he pray often?**
If yes, pray with them – and for them.
- Does s/he bring up God in regular conversation?**
If yes, encourage them by asking them their opinion of spiritual matters. It will make them feel important. And it will keep their mind engaged.
- Does s/he get upset when seeing or hearing of wrong doing?**
If yes, talk to them about how things should be different. Talk to them about good things you see happening in the world. It will give them hope that things can get better.
- Does s/he ask about your church attendance?**
If yes, talk openly and honestly about it. If you're not going currently, consider going with your loved one.
- Does s/he read religious books, magazines, and/or other materials?**
If so, bring them reading material periodically. It will encourage them and it will help keep their mind sharp. If their eyesight is waning, read to them. They will really appreciate it.

Consider buying them audio books so they can listen when you are not there to read to them.

- □ **Does s/he have a strong desire to serve others?**

Help them find simple ways to serve others. Even if it's just helping them write a short note to a friend. Anything to help them serve others will make them feel like they have purpose and will make them happy.

If the answer to any of these questions is no, then use the six Ps below to help you. God can and will change your loved one.

Here are some scripture verses that might encourage you and your loved one.

Deuteronomy 6:5 *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and with all your might."*

I Timothy 4: 7, 8 *"Exercise yourself toward godliness...godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come."*

Galatians 5: 22, 23 *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law."*

In that daily walk with Christ, prepare for lifestyle adjustments with your loved ones through these six (6) Ps:

- **Practice**/model your faith principles through fruit of the spirit.
(unnatural fruit) **Galatians 5: 22, 23**
- **Participate** in your loved one's life in special ways through active listening, hearing real needs, suggesting creative solutions, church and other appropriate outings such as Sunday school, senior church/center activities.
- **Plan** ahead with him/her for needed life style adjustments/change, calling on God for guidance first. Discover His Plan...**Lamentations 3: 22-26**
"The Lord's lovingkindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. 'The Lord is my portion', says my soul, "Therefore, I have hope in Him." The Lord is good to those who wait for Him. To the person who seeks Him. It is good that he waits silently for the salvation of the Lord."

- **Pray** together for needed answers to trials and thank God for His blessings... *We stand tallest on our knees*, Dr. Charles Stanley... Always call on God for guidance first. **Phil. 4:6** *“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be known to God.”*
- **Praise** your loved ones often for the good things you see in them and never be critical. **Psalm 19: 14** *“Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart Be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my rock and my Redeemer.”*
- **Persevere** and never give up when you and your loved ones face a new challenge... God always has His awesome plan in progress in His own time. **Hebrew 11:1** *“Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”*

From the teachings of Dr. Charles Stanley through God’s Word.

Note: This family guide is only a discussion tool to help the family help their senior loved ones with their needs. It is a questionnaire that should help the family develop an action plan for family preparedness, senior care/safety and medical evaluation/attention for a greater quality lifestyle for your loved ones and the family.

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