



# What you can do when an aging parent needs help

The topic of elder care has become more prevalent – and urgent – as many in the “Baby Boom” generation become involved in their aging parents’ support. Oftentimes, adult children must access services for their parents, especially when one or both parents are in a crisis.

Catholic Community Services manages one of the largest elder care agencies in the State of Washington. Samaritan Magazine asked Peter Nazzal, director of the CCS Long Term Care System, for information about elder care issues.

**Q Why are so many people seeking help for aging parents?**

**A** The longer one lives, the greater the likelihood that one will need supportive assistance. People are living longer than ever before. This trend will continue for the next 25 years, as the number of people 85 and older more than doubles.

**Q Is there something significant about age 85 and older?**

**A** Yes. Four out of five people over the age of 85 need help with what are called the “activities of daily living,” or ADLs.

**Q What are ADLs, and what is the importance of needing help with them?**

**A** Activities of daily living include walking, eating, dressing, personal care, bathing, toileting, and taking medication. Needing help with these activities may qualify people for financial assistance through insurance or government programs.

**Q CCS serves more than 3,000 elders every day through a variety of supportive services. Are there common concerns among the people who contact you for help with an aging parent?**

**A** Most often, people come to us at a time of crisis. For example, Mom or Dad has had a fall and is being discharged from the hospital; a primary caregiver is exhausted and needs help; or the spouse who is the caregiver dies and the surviving spouse needs assistance.

**Q What type of help can these families in crisis receive?**

**A** Myriad programs are available to help seniors stay as independent as possible. These include Meals-on-Wheels, home care, adult day services, respite care, and many others.

**Q What if Mom or Dad can no longer remain safely at home, even with these services? Is a nursing home the only option?**

**A** No. An adult family home or assisted living are also options.

**Q Who pays for services?**

**A** There are a variety of sources. The Veterans Administration has a program for veterans. People with incomes of less than \$1,911 per month may qualify for programs paid partially or in full by the state. Insurance pays for some services; people may also pay with their savings.

**Q How does one find out about services?**

**A** The very best place to start gathering information is at a State of Washington website, [www.aasa.dshs.wa.gov](http://www.aasa.dshs.wa.gov). It provides links to all available services and to local offices that will assist people at no cost, whatever their income level.

**Q May people contact CCS if they wish to explore home care?**

**A** Certainly. We offer a free in-home assessment that includes a safety review. For more information call 1-877-870-1582.