



A Successful Respite Care Experience: Tips for Creating a Care Team

It can be worrisome as a caregiver to bring in outside help for a loved one. It is important to prepare for this situation and work with a provider that has an excellent reputation and makes specific efforts to ensure a smooth care transition.

- Find out how an agency handles hiring, supervision and training of staff. How does the agency screen/what qualities do they look for in hiring? Do they offer orientation and ongoing training? Do they pay employees to attend training? How do they review an employee's quality care?
- Plan to meet caregivers ahead of time when possible to ensure a good match and your comfort.
- Find out how a company documents and communicates information. Do they use a system to ensure communication between caregivers? How do they share the [care plan](#)? How do they communicate to you?
- Put together information on your loved one's [daily routine](#). Routine is essential, especially if your loved one has memory issues. Don't forget the little things! Does your loved one prefer a certain snack every day? What time does he/she usually wake up, take a bath, and eat meals? Does the care provider ask these types of questions and how do they communicate this information to caregivers?
- Organize your loved one's important health and contact information (list of diagnoses, medications, doctors and emergency contacts). This will help you as a caregiver, and you will be able to easily provide the necessary information to your care providers.
- Share any important information on behavioral patterns, triggers and likes or dislikes. For example, if your loved one suffers from sundowning behavior in the evening and you have found certain things help, let your care provider know.
- Give some life history and background information to your care team. It helps create conversational topics and helps caregivers to see the dynamic person your loved one is.
- What activities does your loved one enjoy? A caregiver can help maintain the usual routine and favorite activities. Share as much information as possible!

Tips on locating local respite care providers:

- Contact your local Area Agency on Aging and explain the type of care you are looking for and parameters. Consider contacting a [geriatric care manager](#) to help you understand your options, find quality providers, oversee care, and serve as [your advocate](#).
- Visit the ARCH national respite care network for more information and providers: <http://archrespite.org/>.
- If you need financial help with respite care, the Area Agency on Aging or disease-specific organization may be able to help. Some organizations such as the Alzheimer's Association offer limited help with short-term respite/grants.
- As you go through the checklist and tips above, ensure you feel comfortable with the answers and systems the provider uses.
- Ask the provider to see their survey results. (Most licensed providers will be surveyed by their state-beware of using unlicensed providers. Some companies may also use independent survey companies to get feedback and quality assurance and these can be great for seeing what their clients have to say about them.)

Need help or advice on respite care at home? Want to learn more about customized respite care, in-home support or private duty care to supplement care at an assisted living, nursing home or hospital? Call us any time at 727-447-5845 or visit www.easylivingfl.com!