



Our caregivers are highly qualified and carefully selected individuals who are personally and thoroughly screened, bonded and insured. Most importantly our caregivers are totally committed, dependable and extremely caring of others. In addition to their previous experience, our caregivers receive continuous training that includes a specialized curriculum exclusive to Comforting Hands Senior Care that results in them becoming Certified Companion Aides™. These highly qualified and trained caregivers are ready to help you and your loved ones with a variety of daily activities such as:

- *Warm and caring companionship*
- *Light meal preparation*
- *Incidental transportation*
- *Light housekeeping*
- *Medication reminders*
- *Bathing assistance*
- *Respite for family caregivers*
- *Information and referral services*

Our personalized and affordable services are available 7 days a week and can range from a few hours a day to 24 hour care.

Caregiver Profile

Comforting Hands Senior Care Connection Fall 2015

Welcome to our Fall 2015 Comforting Hands Senior Care Connection!

I want to take the opportunity to emphasize the importance of reducing your risk of falling. The National Council of Aging (NCOA) is a nonprofit organization that partners with government, other nonprofit organizations and business to improve the health and security of older adults.

September 23rd is the first day of the fall season and this year's theme for NCOA's annual fall prevention campaign is "Take a Stand to Prevent Falls."

The State of Hawai'i Department of Health, Emergency Medical Services (EMS) section has an ongoing campaign which focus on four simple steps you can take to reduce your risk of falling.

1. **Regularly review your medication with your doctor or pharmacist.** Make sure side effects aren't increasing your risk of falling.
2. **Get your vision and hearing checked annually.** Your eyes and ears are key to keeping you on your feet.
3. **Keep your home safe.** Remove tripping hazards, increase lighting, make stairs safe, and install grab bars in key areas.
4. **Find a good balance and exercise program.**

Look to build balance, strength, and flexibility. There are numerous exercise programs in our community for older adults. Tai Chi – Moving for Better Balance®, Tai Chi for Arthritis®, Yoga, Silver & Fit® and Enhance® Fitness are evidence-based programs shown to be effective in improving balance and

reducing falls. Find a program you like and take a friend.

As for the articles in this newsletter, in the Finance and Consumer Resources section a number of benefits of hiring an elder law attorney is explained.

In the rotating Topic section learn the "Six Tips to Stay Mentally Sharp as You Age" because getting older doesn't mean our brains need to show the same signs of aging that our bodies do.

"Keeping Your Balance" article in the Senior Health and Lifestyles section speaks directly to the NCOA's "Take a Stand to Prevent Falls" theme.

The Spotlight on Caregivers article "Caregivers and The Power of Positive Thinking" provide useful tips for both caregivers and older adults.

Enjoy the newsletter and remember to "Take a Stand to Fall Prevention."

**Live independently.
Live healthy.
Live at home.**

With much aloha,

David T. Nakamaejo,
President
Comforting Hands Senior Care





5 Ways an Elder Law Attorney Can Help You

As you start to get older, there are lots of details -- from paying for potential care to creating wills—that can get confusing for you and your family. Hiring an elder law attorney may help.

“Elder law issues usually go beyond the typical estate-planning issues,” says Edward Zetlin, an attorney in Virginia who specializes in elder law and disability planning. Lawyers who focus on this area can help deal with long-term care planning, public benefit issues, advance health care planning, guardianship/ conservatorship issues, special-needs planning, etc.

There are a number of benefits to hiring an elder law attorney. Here are five.

Provide Skillful Planning

Elder law attorneys can inform clients about the need to think and plan for long-term care needs.” A good understanding of the nature of the continuum of care from in-home care to independent living to nursing homes is vital. Elder law attorneys work with individuals proactively to ensure that they receive needed help or care that is aligned with their wishes, while still protecting savings.

Decode the Law

Hiring a professional who understands the language of the law can help you or your loved one move forward in the right direction. “Often, the relevant laws are unclear or contradictory, making it difficult to know the outcomes of various options that may be available,” says Gregory French, president of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys (NAELA).

Mediate Impartially

A lawyer can act as a mediator and problem-solver. Should mom go into a nursing home or assisted living? Arguments about such important issues can quickly escalate and result in resentment among the family and stalled progress in implementing needed care.

Navigate Available Benefits

Elder law attorneys are well-versed in the current state of public benefits that may pay for long-term care and senior housing such as Medicare, Medicaid and Veterans benefits. Their specialty encompasses information about nursing homes, in-home care, powers of attorneys, living wills, health-care proxies, trusts, guardianships and conservatorships and reverse mortgages.

Recruit Outside Sources

It may be useful to have the assistance of someone who is used to appearing before administrative agencies and obtaining public assistance. “Elder law attorneys frequently collaborate with other specialists involved in providing services to the elderly,” Zetlin says. “This includes care managers, financial planners, social service and eligibility workers, the Agency on Aging, ombudsman—the list can be quite long.”

But where do you find the right elder law attorney? Look for someone who is a member of NAELA and specializes in elder law (rather than this being a small part of their broader practice). How many cases like yours has the attorney handled? Request to speak with current and former clients as references. You can even ask for references in the attorney’s professional community.

Be sure to also inquire about fees. Is the attorney willing to conduct a free consultation? Are they structured hourly or do they charge a flat fee? Will your attorney charge a retainer? Also ask if your lawyer can estimate the cost of your entire case so you can budget for the services.

You can ensure that you and your loved ones are prepared for the unpredictable by consulting an elder law attorney as you plan for the future.

By Kelly Johnson
www.care.com/a/what-is-an-elder-law-attorney-1404221221



ROTATING TOPIC

6 Tips to Stay Mentally Sharp as You Age

We’re all getting older, but that doesn’t mean our brains need to show the same signs of aging that our bodies do. There are everyday health habits that can help slow or reverse an aging brain. “It’s all about maintaining and building new neural pathways, the roads in our brains that carry information,” says Candy Hart of TriHealth Seniority. “Keeping those pathways elastic and creating new brain cells can help improve brain function at every age, and there are lots of ways to do that.”

Try these tips to stay mentally sharp:

Tip #1: LEARN SOMETHING NEW

Whether it’s playing an instrument or diving into a new foreign language, learning something new and working outside your comfort zone involves many different areas of the brain. Even something as basic as trying a new driving route while you’re out running errands will help forge new neural pathways.

Tip #2:
USE YOUR HANDS

“Eye-hand coordination is both visual and tactile, and will fill the brain with activity.” Something as simple as throwing a ball or using your non-dominant hand can build brain power. Even better, try sign language: You’ll get the benefit of learning a new language, and combining that with the hand motions used in sign language, exercises even more—and different—areas of the brain.

Tip #3:
SEE SOMETHING NEW

Get out of your normal routine and experience something new, like an art exhibit. You will get even more benefit from

the experience by writing down what you did and what you learned, or researching something that interested you. Then, discuss the experience with family and friends.”

Tip #4:
MEMORIZE

This can be as simple as memorizing a new word, or lyrics to a song, every day. Write the lyrics down, then sing along. That careful listening will sharpen thinking.

Tip #5:
EAT ANTIOXIDANTS

Foods like blueberries and dark chocolate contain antioxidants, which scavenge free radicals, the cause for age-related human

diseases. Bonus: foods high in antioxidants may also delay or prevent cancer and neurodegenerative diseases, like Alzheimer’s. They can also lower cholesterol and blood pressure.

Tip #6:
MOVE

Activity pumps up brain function and has been shown to increase the number of brain cells in the hippocampus. Fifteen to 30 minutes of exercise, three times a week, will lessen the chance of developing Alzheimer’s.

www.trihealth.com/dailyhealthwire/senior-health/6-Ways-to-Stay-Mentally-Sharp-As-You-Age.aspx

Senior Health & Lifestyles

Keeping Your Balance

About eight million Americans have balance problems and one in three Americans over age 65 will fall every year. Injuries from falls, like a fractured hip, can change a senior’s life in ways seniors fear most—isolation and loss of independence. For seniors and caregivers, understanding balance disorders and knowing when to get help can go a long way toward avoiding falls and the devastating consequences that may come with it.

“A balance disorder is a disturbance that causes you to feel unsteady, lightheaded or as if you or the room is spinning. Balance disorders can be due to a disturbance in the inner ear, but they can also be caused by visual problems, skeletal problems or nerve problems,” says Lawrence Meiteles, MD, medical director of The Balance Center at Northern Westchester Hospital in Mount Kisco, New York. “A balance disorder may also be a sign of a serious medical problem so symptoms should never be ignored,” warns Meiteles.

Symptoms of a Balance Disorder

Being able to maintain good balance means being able to keep a steady position while

walking or standing. Someone with a balance problem may walk unsteadily, fall sideways when standing or have trouble going up or down stairs. Common symptoms that go along with a balance disorder are dizziness, visual problems, confusion, anxiety and nausea.

Common Causes of Balance Disorders

“The most common cause is a combination of factors that go along with aging. We know from studying the inner ear that the cells responsible for maintaining balance start to degenerate with age. Aging and the diseases of aging also affect vision and the bones and joints. Good balance requires that all these systems work together,” explains Dr. Meiteles.

Positional vertigo. Vertigo is the false sensation of movement, usually described as spinning. Positional Vertigo is caused by cell changes in the inner ear.

Labyrinthitis or vestibular neuronitis. The inner ear organ that controls balance is called “the labyrinth.” If this organ becomes infected or inflamed it causes vertigo and loss of balance. The main nerve that

communicates balance signals to and from the brain is called the “vestibular nerve.” It can be affected by infection or inflammation.

Meniere’s disease. This is a condition in which the fluid inside the labyrinth increases. It affects both balance and hearing. Symptoms include hearing that comes and goes, a roaring sound, a sensation of fullness in the ears and vertigo.

Other causes. Head trauma may cause a leak of inner ear fluid that causes vertigo. Some types of tumors can affect balance. Certain types of medications, circulation problems, neurological diseases and arthritis in the neck can all be causes of a balance disorder.

Treatment of Balance Disorders

The first step is to see your primary care doctor to rule out common medical problems or medications that might be causing a balance disturbance. If your doctor thinks you need a specialist you will usually be referred to an ear, nose and throat specialist. Tests that may be run include blood tests and

Continues on page 4

special imaging of the brain and inner ear. Depending on the diagnosis, some common treatments for balance disorders include:

Vestibular rehabilitation. These are special exercises that are done with the help of a therapist. “When you have a condition like positional vertigo, as soon as you feel dizzy you lie still. This does not allow your brain to learn how to adapt and turn off the dizzy signal,” says Meiteles.

Physical and occupational therapy. For people who have long-standing or recurrent balance problems physical therapy can help them strengthen the muscles needed for balance as well as learn techniques to compensate safely for balance problems.

Medications and surgery. Medications

that calm dizziness, nausea and anxiety may all be useful. If medical therapy and physical therapy are not effective a surgical procedure that interrupts the vestibular nerve may be needed.

Final Tips for Seniors and Caregivers

Pay attention to the way your loved one describes what he or she is experiencing to know when to seek a medical consultation:

Symptoms of dizziness can be hard to express and may be described as feeling unsteady, lightheaded, spinning, moving, giddy or tipsy. Symptoms other than dizziness may be described such as nausea, blurred vision, anxiety or confusion.

Watch out for any history of falls, a

staggering gait, having to reach out and hold on or trouble getting out of a chair or bed.

Seniors may need to rely more on visual cues for balance, so make sure hallways are lit at night.

Seniors may not compensate well for a slight trip, so clear walking areas of loose rugs, electric cords and low furniture.

The ability to balance decreases with age, but losing your balance is not a normal part of aging. Most balance disorders can be treated and many falls can be prevented.

By Chris Iliades, MD

www.parentgiving.com/elder-care/keeping-your-balance/



SPOTLIGHT ON CAREGIVERS

Caregivers and the Power of Positive Thinking

For most of us, aging comes with increased health issues, thoughts of our own mortality and sometimes watching the ones we love—friends and family—pass away. It becomes very easy to fall into depression and depression can lead to a variety of physical problems like high blood pressure, heart problems and diabetes. That’s where the power of positive thinking comes in. Positive thoughts condition our brain to think positively and our body follows the command of our brain.

For older seniors a caregiver plays an important role in maintaining positive thoughts and healthy aging. Caregivers are trained to watch for warning signs of depression like loss of interest in daily

activities and restlessness. With careful observation, caregivers can help to stave off depression by offering companionship and promoting fun, happy, activities like gardening and dancing or offering transportation to social events and church.

Here are some tips to maintain a positive frame of mind—for both caregivers and their charges:

CULTIVATE ENTHUSIASM.

Do your best to be happy and not to indulge in negative thoughts. The glass can be half full or half empty—it’s always the same glass. Remember it’s a choice!

KEEP A SENSE OF HUMOR.

Perhaps more than any other strategy, finding something to laugh about is an effective buffer for the difficulties we face in life.

SHOW GRATITUDE.

Everyday find something to be grateful for. The shoes on your feet. The food on your plate. The flowers in your garden.

BE COMPASSIONATE.

Put yourself in other people’s shoes. Understanding leads to acceptance.

BE FLEXIBLE.

Understanding that things are not always going to go the way you would like and being comfortable changing course is a life skill worth practicing.

HAVE FAITH.

Whether it be a belief in a force beyond yourself or the belief in the best possible outcome for a situation, maintaining faith in things beyond your control is crucial to a positive outlook.

DREAM.

Engage in “imagineering.” Set a goal. Aim high.

LEARN FROM MISTAKES.

If we approach life as an opportunity to learn and grow, even negative experiences provide a positive take-away.

TAKE JOY IN HELPING OTHERS.

Helping others and touching lives can be a huge source of satisfaction in our lives. Knowing that you’ve made a difference in someone’s life can bring nothing but positive thoughts.

CULTIVATE ACCEPTANCE.

Work to accept adversity and disappointments—they are an inevitable part of our journey. If you can overcome and accept what you cannot change you will emerge the stronger for it.

THINK “LOVE” FIRST.

Develop a loving and forgiving attitude to everyone around you. It will come back to you ten-fold.