

Winning Strategies for Family Caregiving: Lessons from Family Game Night

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My Care Companions



This presentation is for informational purposes only and is not to be considered legal, financial or health advice.

Certified Senior Advisors (CSAs) have supplemented their individual professional licenses, credentials and education with knowledge about aging and working with seniors.

The Goal of the Family Caregiving Game is to finish with the best quality of life possible and with family relationships and resources intact



Rules of the Game



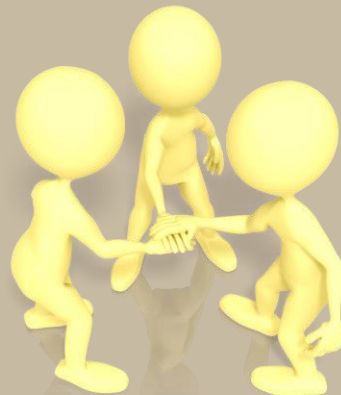
1

Play nice
on the
Playground



2

Avoid
Family
Demons



Jealousy

Greed

Resentment

Playing the Game

1

Choose
Your Team



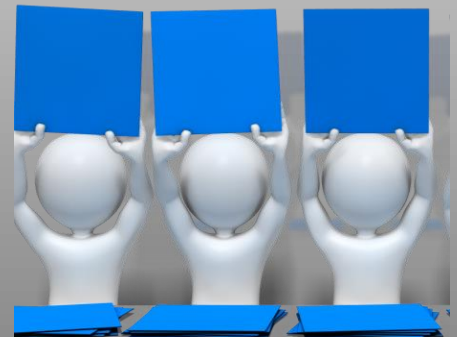
2

Develop the
Game Plan



3

Keeping
Track





Choosing Your Team



- There is no “should” when building the team
- Select a Team Manager to coordinate the team activities
- Choose Team Members based on their talents, capabilities, availability, and motivation
- Add Professionals and Advisors, as needed



Choosing Your Team

Team Member Worksheet

WHO IS ON YOUR CARE TEAM?

YOU & Your Closest Family & Friends

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Medical Team Members

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Non Medical Professionals

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Other Family & Friends

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

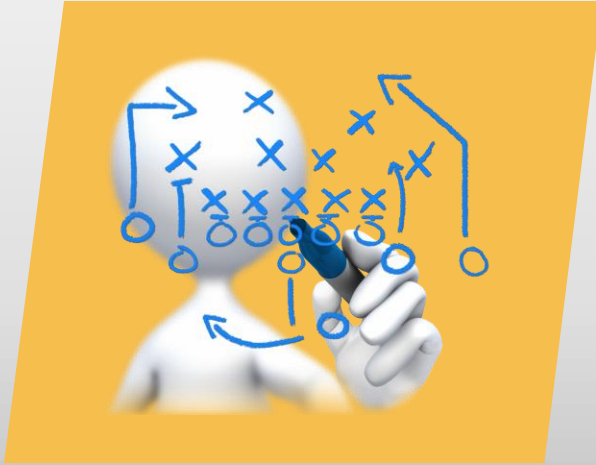
Additional Resources

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

WHAT ARE YOUR BARRIERS TO ASKING FOR HELP?



Develop Your Game Plan



- Complete a needs assessment
- Determine how responsibilities will be divided or shared
- Align on a communication plan including who, when, what & how
- Assess and develop a care plan
- Re-evaluate your care plan regularly as needs change



Develop Your Game Plan

Needs Assessment

Activities of Daily Living (ADL)

- Bathing
- Dressing
- Feeding
- Grooming
- Mobility / Stairs
- Transfer
- Toilet Use
- Continence (Bladder/Bowel)

Independent Activities of Daily Living (IADL)

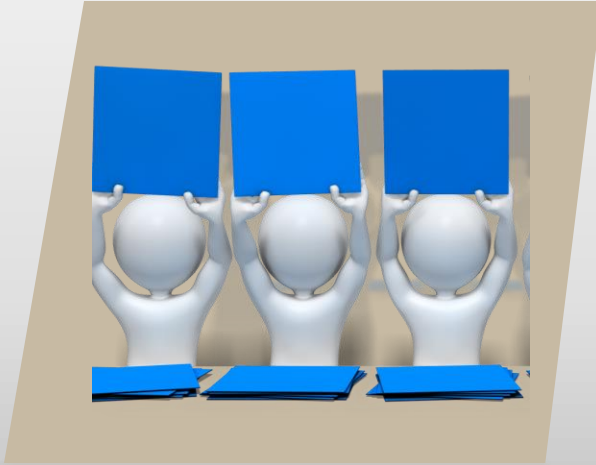
- Telephone
- Shopping
- Food Preparation
- Housekeeping
- Laundry
- Transportation
- Medications
- Finances

CARE PLAN FOR _____

AREA NEEDING ATTENTION	GOAL	ACTION ITEM/OUTCOME	ASSIGNED TO & STATUS



Keeping Track



- Monitor and balance the individual impacts of caregiving (effort and hours)
- Keep track of the economic impact of caregiving
- Create agreements to balance economic impacts, as needed
- Reward and recognize the caregivers for their efforts

**Harsh
Reality**

**Talk
the Talk**

**Family
Dynamics**

**Health
Matters**

**Money
Matters**

**Taking
Care**

**Blind
Man's Bluff**

Charades

Trouble

Operation

Risk

Twister

**Would
You Rather**

Telephone

**Family
Feud**

**Twenty
Questions**

**Blame
Game**

Taboo

**Scavenger
Hunt**

**Tug of
War**

**Chutes &
Ladders**

Monopoly

Sorry

Jeopardy

Solitaire

**Hide
and Seek**

Dominos

I Dissent

**Trivial
Pursuit**

Caregiving Games Part 2

Caregiving Games We Play



Blind Man Bluff

If I don't know about it,
it can't hurt me...

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[Answer](#)



Blind Man's Bluff

- Recognize and accept the need for help
- Sometimes the closer you are the harder it is to see
- Examine your justifications and excuses



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Would You Rather?

Sometimes you won't like the choices you need to make...

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[Answer](#)



Would You Rather



- Evaluate values and preferences for care
- Research options
- Create plans and back-up plans

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Taboo

It is important to talk
about the difficult topics

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[Answer](#)



Taboo

- It is a mistake to assume that people don't want to talk about these issues
- Leverage tools and resources to ease difficult topics and conversations
- Honesty is critical for successful caregiving



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Jeopardy

Avoid the trap of
Expectation Bias

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Answer



Jeopardy



- We plan for what we expect to happen
- Life has a way of throwing the unexpected at us
- Develop a plan and a backup plan

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Charades

Clear and effective
communication

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[Answer](#)



Charades

- Candid and honest
- Clear and complete
- Confirm understanding with reflective listening
- Check-in and update frequently



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Telephone

Implement winning
Communication Strategies

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Answer



Telephone



- Listen to understand
- Assume positive intent
- Know when it is important to be right (and when it's not)
- Avoid anger, fear & blame

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Scavenger Hunt

Avoid urgent searches for
information and documents

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[Answer](#)



Scavenger Hunt



- Gather and organize information and documents
 - Personal
 - Household
 - Medical
 - Financial
 - Legal
- Share with care companions
- Update regularly

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Solitaire

Don't try to do it all alone

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[Answer](#)



Solitaire

- Include the care recipient
- Build a support network
 - Family
 - Friends
 - Neighbors
 - Professionals
 - Service Organizations
- Share responsibilities
- Recognize signs of caregiver burnout



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Trouble

Added stress and responsibility
can impact family relationships

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[Answer](#)



Trouble



Even the strongest of relationships can be tested by caregiving responsibilities

- Maintain open and honest communication
- Assume positive intent
- Seek help if you need it

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Family Feud

You may need help to solve
some family disagreements

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[Answer](#)



Family Feud

Seek assistance to
resolve challenging
disputes:

- Industry professionals
- Counselors
- Mediators
- Lawyers



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Tug of War

Prioritize the best interests
of the care recipient

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[Answer](#)



Tug of War

- Work together to make the best available choice for care
- Avoid presenting impossible choices to your loved one
- Don't withhold access unless a safety issue



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Hide and Seek

Family contributions
are not always equal

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[Answer](#)



Hide and Seek

Out of sight... out of mind

- Distance and circumstance may make it difficult for everyone to participate
- Accept that not everyone may be willing to help
- Focus on individual strengths
- Assign administrative support tasks to those who can and will



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Operation

It is important to advocate
for your loved one

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Answer

Operation



- Prepare for your upcoming medical visits / procedures
- Accompany your loved one and take notes to share with your care partners
- Ask questions and advocate for care that is needed
- Raise concerns and ask for treatment, if needed

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Twenty Questions

The advocate needs to know
your values and preferences

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[Answer](#)

Twenty Questions

- Make sure you know what your loved one values and prefers
- When making decisions for your loved one, consider THEIR values and preferences (not yours)



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Chutes & Ladders

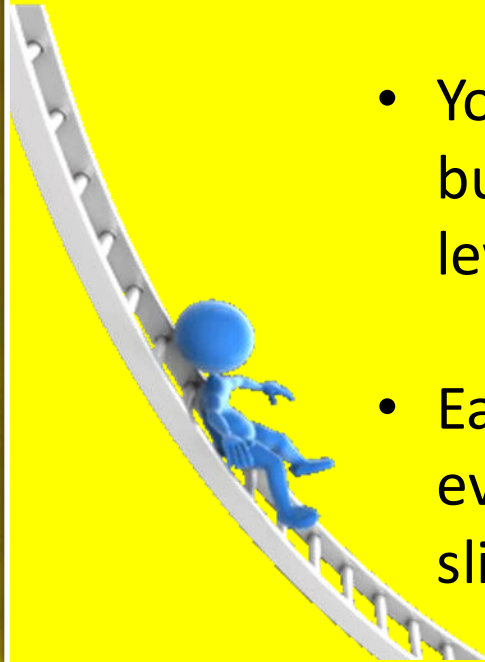
Your will likely experience
healthcare highs and lows

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[Answer](#)

Chutes & Ladders

- Medical events often result in a permanent decline
- Your loved one will improve but often not to the same level of function as before
- Each subsequent medical event may leave them in a slightly weaker state



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Dominos

Many healthcare issues will
lead to another... and another

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[Answer](#)

Dominos



- Advanced health issues can impact multiple systems and organs
- Medications can have side effects creating new problems
- If your loved one is in a weakened state, recovery from even minor issues may be challenged

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Sharing Control

Game: Risk

- Be willing to give up control
 - Avoid Martyrdom
 - Identify Learned Incompetence
 - Remove Barriers / Excuses
- How family can help from a distance
 - Long Distance Caregiving Solutions

Risk

Make sure you know what
insurance coverage you have
and how it works

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[Answer](#)

Risk

- Take an inventory of all available insurance policies to understand what they do and don't cover
- Make sure you understand specialty coverages or riders
- Consult an insurance professional to and ask for a detailed review and explanation



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Life

Understand the
assets and resources available
to help pay for care

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[Answer](#)

Life

- Take inventory of all assets: bank accounts, investments, properties, and insurance policies
- Consider alternatives to liquidate assets to pay for care (life settlement, reverse mortgage, etc)
- Proactively consult with your attorney, tax professionals, and financial advisors
- Ensure that current financial power of attorney documents are on record



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Monopoly

Make sure money matters
are addressed through
written agreements and wills

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[Answer](#)

Monopoly

- Specify estate distribution wishes in your will and/or estate plan
- Select a trusted family member, trusted friend, or professional to manage your financial affairs if needed
- Make sure you understand the “fiduciary” responsibilities of your advisors



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I Dissent

Develop comprehensive estate plans to minimize litigation risk

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[Answer](#)

I Dissent



- Develop comprehensive plans and document to minimize conflicts
- Consider the financial impacts of caregiving on family members and contract agreements to address
- Understand how individuals will benefit from long-term-care arrangements

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Twister

Caregivers often defer
caring for their own
health and well-being

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[Answer](#)

Twister

- Monitor the health and well-being of family caregivers
- Ensure that caregivers are attending to their own medical and preventive care needs
- Arrange for respite and self-care



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Blame Game

It takes work and intention to
maintain supportive and positive
family relationships

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[Answer](#)

Blame Game

- Assume positive intent
- Seek solutions together
- Avoid anger and blame
- Nurture family relationships with non-care-related activities. Have fun!



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Sorry

Accept that things won't
always go as planned

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Answer

Sorry



- Be willing to acknowledge when things go wrong
- Know when it is important to stand your ground (health and safety)
- Apologize when appropriate
- Forgive yourself for unintended consequences

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Trivial Pursuit

Use your network of
knowledgeable friends
and trusted professionals
to find information and answers

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[Answer](#)

Trivial Pursuit

- Understand you may not have all of the information and answers you need
- Access community resources for assistance
- Consult with trusted advisors, consultants, and professionals



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Finishing the Game

Needs
Are
Met

Relationships
Are
Maintained



Subject matter provided by Dee Childers, MA, CMC



Dee founded Life Changes Elder Care Consulting after experiencing the challenges of helping her parents move from an independent lifestyle to assisted living due to infirmity and memory loss. She saw very clearly what many others have seen — the lack of readily available information and resources for helping a senior family member. It became clear to her that with our aging population, many others would also find themselves feeling clueless and overwhelmed with the responsibilities of senior care giving.

Her training and background in both counseling and human resources management and first-hand experience with her changing role in family inspired Dee to turn her experience into a way to help others in similar situations. Life Changes Elder Care Consulting was founded to help those needing guidance and support on senior care issues by providing professional geriatric care management that helps with planning and coordinating the care of the elderly to improve their quality of life and maintain their independence for as long as possible. Life Changes works with families around the country to assess, select and manage the specific needs of our elders while giving family caregivers the professional help you need to manage and support the needs of those they love.

Dee is a NACCM Certified Care Manager (CMC), earned a BS in Psychology from the University of Utah and a MS in Marriage and Family Therapy from the Phillips Graduate Institute. She comes to this profession from 30 years in corporate America as a Human Resources Executive with extensive experience in interpersonal dynamics, crisis management, conflict resolution, mediation, benefits, and health and safety. She worked as a Marriage and Family Therapist for six years. She has been a caregiver for many years to her parents and others, and personally understands the demands and emotional turmoil of care giving and the tolls it takes on you, your aging loved one and the family. She is a court ordered Guardian and Conservator, experience with the legal and medical system. She is a certified Elder Mediator and volunteer for the Alzheimer's Association. Dee is currently the President of the board for the Idaho Guardians and Fiduciary Association. She previously served on the board for Friends in Action, a non-profit providing respite caregiving; JAVA, the Justice Alliance for Vulnerable Adults. She is an Advanced Professional member of the Aging Life Care Association™.



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Subject matter provided by Darra Wray, CSA



Darra Wray is a business professional from Boise, Idaho. She has more than 25 years of practical business and finance experience and an MBA from the Anderson School at UCLA. Darra also has over 25 years of personal experience as a family caregiver and patient advocate and has had a life-long interest in healthcare. She developed a true passion for family caregiving and elder care services through her personal life experiences. As the CFO of a large non-profit organization, Darra saw how reliant businesses have become on immediate and secure access to information. Yet, as the CEO of her family, she discovered that she often did not have the information she needed to manage and support her family.

In 2018, Darra became a Certified Senior Advisor (CSA) and left her role as a finance executive to launch **My Care Companions**. Darra developed the **My Data Diary+** family information management tool and set out on a mission to change the family information management paradigm. **My Care Companions** provides education, tools, and resources to family caregivers so they can focus more of their time and energy on caring for their loved ones. In 2020, Darra founded **LEARN: Lifelong Education and Aging Resource Network** to join with other professionals to provide free, quality community education on aging and caregiving topics. Darra invites you all to embrace technology for better living and to join her revolution to liberate your data!



My Care Companions

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