

when in doubt Seek Professional Assessment Cognitive/Mental Health

- Has your parent been diagnosed with a mental or cognitive illness?
- Are there symptoms of Alzheimer's or other dementia or memory loss?
- Does your loved one experience confusion or disorientation? Wander?
- Does your parent still enjoy activities? Friends?
- Describe your parent's level of alertness.
- Does your loved one experience mood swings?
- Have there been changes in sleeping patterns?

Physical Health

- Does your parent have any chronic diseases?
- What symptoms does your parent experience? Any new symptoms?
- Has your loved one recently been hospitalized? Reason? When? Length of stay? Prognosis?
- How is your loved one's mobility? Do they use a walker? A wheelchair?
- Is their current place of residence accessible?
- When was the last dental appointment? Is there mouth pain? Can they chew their food?
- Does your parent have vision problems?
- Does your parent have hearing loss?

If you're having trouble figuring out what the next step should be, a geriatric care manager (usually a social worker or nurse) can help. 

Activities of Daily Living

- Does your loved one use or need to start using any adaptive devices?
- What special dietary needs does your parent have?
- Can your parent bathe or shower independently?
- Do they need bathroom/toilet assistance?
- Does your loved one need help getting dressed?
- Does your parent need transferring to and from bed?
- Do they need home or yard maintenance help?
- Do they do their own shopping?
- Is your parent still able to drive?

Medications

- Do you have a list of all medications they are taking, including over-the-counter and herbal or homeopathic remedies?
- Is your loved one able to manage taking the right medications at the right times?

Keeping up Appearances

- Does your loved one need help with clothing care or choices?
- Is your parent able to maintain personal hygiene?

A geriatric care manager can perform a professional assessment of your parent's or loved one's quality of life. 

Money Matters

- What legal documents have been drawn? (will, durable power of attorney, living will, etc.)
- Does your parent have insurance coverage?
- Is there a comprehensive financial plan in place?
- Does your parent have any assets? Own their home?
- Is your loved one still able to manage expenses?

Current Home Safety and Comfort

- Is the neighborhood safe? Does your parent know and like the neighbors?
- Is the home and yard maintained for safety?
- Does your parent have the ability to avoid fraud and scams?
- Has the house been modified or remodeled to meet your parent's changing needs?
- Are there smoke alarms? (With strobe lights for the hearing impaired?)

Support System

- What is the contact information for the family members? Do they live close by?
- Are any family members available and willing to help with caregiving?
- Who are your parent's friends? Do they visit often?
- Does your parent belong to a religious or social group?

Personal Interests

- What does your parent enjoy? Include any social, physical, artistic, or relaxation activities.
- Does your parent have a religious preference?
- What were any past careers/volunteer work?

A geriatric care manager can then make a recommendation to help clarify what kind of care your parent might need now and how to plan for the future. 