

CONSULTATION SERVICES

Given that each caregiver experience is unique how, then, do Caregiver Specialists know WHERE to start? Caregiver Specialists rely on evidenced-based research that guides them to listen for patterns.

Patterns offer strong clues and assist Caregiver Specialists to identify a starting point to begin recommending services. In short, this strategy efficiently targets support services now, and all along the caregiver journey.

Consistent to all caregivers is that the caregiver journey is a systematic change process:

- Change in activities (the tasks they do; responsibilities they assume); change also in time and intensity
- Change in relationship with the care receiver
- Change in identity of the caregiver (self). This self-appraisal is consistently challenged throughout all the phases of caregiving.

The research identifies five Phases of Caregiving. Note that the caregiver doesn't necessarily plow through each one of these phases! The process ebbs and flows – moving backward and forward - through the phases.

1. Vigilance (e.g. aware the care receiver needs and concerns about safety)
2. Recognize caregiving is outside the role
3. Caregiving a significant part of the identity
4. Thoughts of placing the care receiver outside the home
5. Acts on placement

What happens when the caregiver reaches a transition between phases?

Caregivers experience:

- Point of high stress;
- Demands shift (Example: a person operating in one phase and thinking another);
Behavior doesn't line up with their rules; sense of distress;
- Personal rules out of sync with behavior;
- Finding balance reduces stress and burden. (It's not what they are doing but how they feel about what they are doing that makes the difference.
This is why consultation is such an important service.

The program's consultation services may include, and is not limited to:

- Assisting family caregivers with solving problems that are immediate and pragmatic.
- Providing strategies to better manage and cope with their changing caregiver role.
- Helping develop specific behavioral changes that enable the caregiver to consider and manage the phases of caregiving, as well as short- and long-term care decisions and planning.
- Teaching caregivers to use need-focused strategies as they navigate community resources.

Snohomish County Caregiver Support Program

To make an appointment please contact a Caregiver Specialist:

Senior Services: (425) 290-1240

Alzheimer's Association: (206) 363-5500

Stillaguamish Senior Center: North County: (425) 248-5276

Stillaguamish Senior Center: East and South County: (425) 248-5156