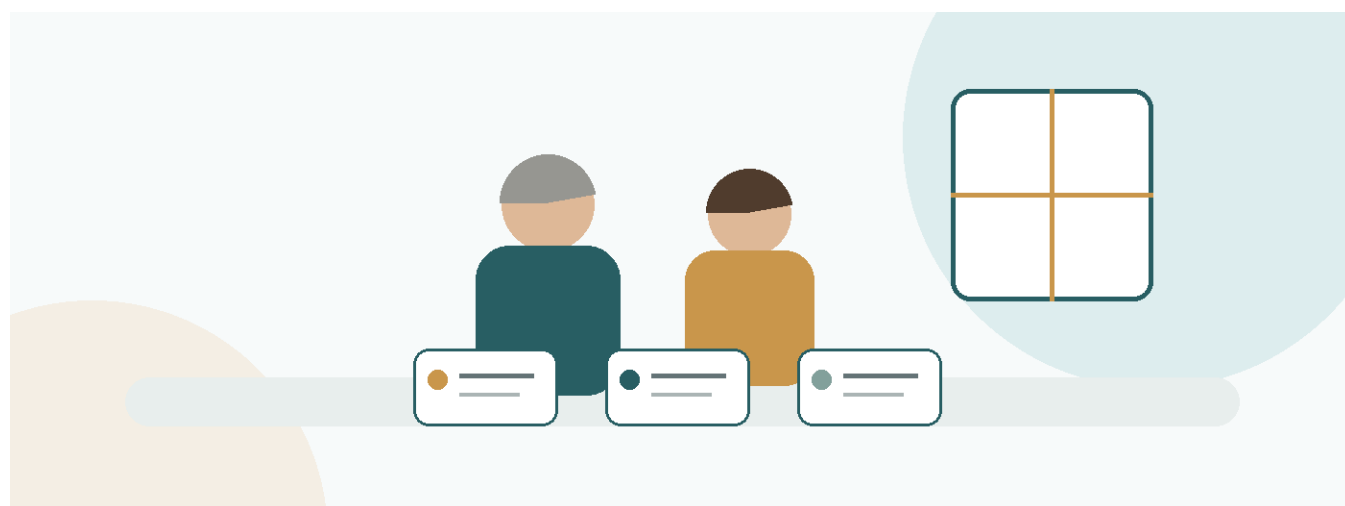


Is This Urgent, or Can We Plan?

Separating immediate concerns from problems that can be worked through

GUIDE 2

Warm, practical guidance
for adult children & families



A warm, practical guide for adult children and families

Not every problem has the same clock

When you realize a parent may need help, everything can suddenly feel urgent. It helps to separate situations that need immediate professional attention from problems that are important but can be addressed with a thoughtful plan.

If there may be immediate danger

Call 911 or seek appropriate emergency assistance when you believe there is an immediate threat to life or safety. Examples can include a suspected medical emergency, serious injury, fire, a person who is missing or in immediate danger, or another situation that cannot safely wait.

If a person is in emotional crisis or may harm themselves, call or text 988 in the United States for the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline. A family guide is not a substitute for emergency or professional care.

Concerns that deserve prompt professional attention

Some changes may not be a 911 emergency but should not simply be managed as a household problem. New or worsening confusion, repeated falls, significant changes in weight or hygiene, concerning medication issues, or meaningful changes in physical or mental health are reasons to contact an appropriate health professional.

Problems you can often plan around

Many challenges of aging are coordination problems rather than emergencies: transportation, groceries, home maintenance, appointment scheduling, social connection, household help, paperwork, or finding community services.

These still matter. The difference is that you usually have time to involve your parent, compare options, decide who can help, and put a workable plan in place.

Use three simple buckets

DO NOW — A situation that may be unsafe or needs immediate professional attention.

DO SOON — Important, but there is time to make calls, arrange appointments, involve family, or find services.

KEEP WATCHING — A change you have noticed but do not yet understand. Write it down, talk with your parent, and see whether it continues.

Avoid solving a health problem as a logistics problem

A ride, reminder, meal delivery, or home service can solve a practical need. It should not be used to explain away a health or safety concern that deserves professional evaluation. When you are unsure, contacting an appropriate professional is a safer next step.

ROLAND'S TAKEAWAY

“The question is not “Is everything okay?” It is “What needs attention now, what can we plan, and what should we continue to watch?” That distinction can make a stressful situation much more manageable.”

A NOTE FROM ANCHOR

This guide is educational and is intended to help families organize their thinking and prepare for conversations. It is not medical, legal, financial, mental-health, or professional care-management advice. For health, safety, legal, financial, or other professional concerns, contact an appropriately qualified professional.

TRUSTED RESOURCES & FURTHER READING

Anchor developed this guide as original educational guidance informed by established caregiving resources. We encourage families to visit these organizations directly for additional information.

- **National Institute on Aging — Does an Older Adult in Your Life Need Help?**
<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/caregiving/does-older-adult-your-life-need-help>
- **National Institute on Aging — Getting Started With Caregiving**
<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/caregiving/getting-started-caregiving>
- **National Institute on Aging — Services for Older Adults Living at Home**
<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/caregiving/services-older-adults-living-home>

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- **National Institute on Aging — Sharing Caregiving Responsibilities**

<https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/caregiving/sharing-caregiving-responsibilities>

- **AARP — New to Family Caregiving? 10 Tips on How to Get Started**

<https://www.aarp.org/caregiving/basics/how-to-be-a-caregiver.html>

- **Family Caregiver Alliance — Caregiving 101: On Being a Caregiver**

<https://www.caregiver.org/resource/caregiving-101-being-caregiver/>