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When Mom and Dad Need Help

Michael C. Campbell
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Everyone dreads certain conversations: talking to your girlfriend's father about marrying her, explaining the birds and the bees to your children, and telling your parents that you think they need to consider senior housing and care. However, the latter discussion doesn't have to be quite so difficult. In *When Mom and Dad Need Help*, Michael C. Campbell, consultant to the senior housing and care industry, explains how to bring up the issues of parental care and how to sort through the options to make a wise choice.

In this immensely practical book, Campbell sorts through every option for senior care, from independent living communities to continuing care facilities and hospice programs. For each, he discusses the pros and cons, the cost, what to look for in a facility, credentialing and oversight, and questions to ask before signing any contracts. Campbell's advice covers the basics, yet he is unafraid to delve into that which is complex. For example, he explains the specific architectural design needs of Alzheimer's patients, writing, "Such design features include continuous/circular hallways with certain patterns, colors, and distinct visual clues; enclosed outdoor patio, even lighting throughout the building or wing…line-of-sight bathrooms, closets, and refrigerators." Campbell also provides information on hiring independent caretakers and nurses, including how to conduct background checks and what interview questions to ask.

An included CD-ROM provides forms and questionnaires to complete when interviewing, researching, and touring facilities and programs. The book also includes useful advice on how to bring up the issue of senior care with one's parents, which family members should be involved in decision-making, and who should have the final say.

Campbell writes with sensitivity and compassion, revealing an understanding of the concerns and issues involved in selecting care for seniors. Hundreds of visits to senior housing and care communities have given him the insider insight necessary for making difficult life decisions.

When Mom and Dad Need Help is recommended for anyone and everyone who is close to an older family member. Decisions regarding senior care are extremely difficult to make under pressure or when the person concerned is unable to share his or her wishes. Reading through this book and discussing it together provides a simple, loving, and gentle way to begin planning the very best solution to senior care. The book presents information in an easy-to-understand way that always feels caring, encouraging, and hopeful. And for a book mainly intended to pass along straight facts and advice, it is an enjoyable read as well.
DIANE GARDNER (May / June 2010)

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