

Am I in Denial? How to Know When...
Your Parent May Need Help / Planning to Avoid a Crisis

It is human nature to be resilient and strong, and therefore not want to recognize our own weaknesses or especially weaknesses in our loved ones. This is especially true as our parent's age and we are faced with their mortality and the truth that we may need to step in to a care giving role. How do you balance providing help and making sure a loved one is safe with allowing them to be an independent adult who has the right to sometimes make poor choices? This is a tricky dilemma, one which interweaves with past history, emotional issues, familial roles and generational differences (see below for some great reference material). Here are some warning signs to look out for which may indicate the need for more help.

Has your loved one...

- Experienced a fall/falls (often if you know of one, more minor ones have occurred that are not mentioned)? Or unexplained injuries?
- Decreased activity, withdrawn from social activities, or appears fearful of going out or participating in regular activities or exercise?
- Exhibited forgetfulness or memory loss, which they may try to cover for but you notice perhaps they forget to pay a bill or ask a question twice, or perhaps allow a relative to speak for them more often?
- Neglected personal hygiene or household duties? This may be subtle, such as someone who was previously meticulous starting to clean less or repeat outfits.
- Changed eating habits? Eating less or hoarding items, cooking less or eating more sweets or snacks vs. cooking meals or eating nutritiously?
- Missed appointments or left prescriptions unfilled?
- Made unusual purchases or decisions that seem uncharacteristic/in bad judgment?
- Shown signs of depression and loneliness?

It may be valuable to have an independent evaluation of your loved one if you are not sure about signs you may see. It is hard to see things unemotionally when dealing with a family member, and there is a delicate balance between ensuring safety and allowing a person his/her independence. Our geriatric care managers can do an evaluation, and approach it in a way that does not insult the elder's sense of self. The care manager can then assist you in options for supporting your loved one's safety while maximizing their independence and quality of life.

Contact Aging Wisely today at 727-447-5845 to schedule a free consultation.