

When There is a Hospitalization

Developed from material from the NYC Caregiver



When care responsibilities come unexpectedly as a result of hospitalization, it's easy to feel overwhelmed. Suddenly, all you have are questions with no easy answers. The following tips can help guide you through hospital stays and discharge.

- Use the hospitalization time to formulate your plan of action following discharge.
- Depending on the reason for hospitalization, your loved one may be able to return to their own home or may require a nursing home or rehabilitation stay for a short while.
- Locate the hospital social worker assigned to your loved one in order to discuss the hospital's discharge plan as soon as possible.
- If a return home is likely, it is very important to work with the hospital social worker to identify what community supports and in home care will be needed to ensure that your loved one is safe and well cared for.
- Many Polk County hospitals hand out lists giving the names of helping agencies and organizations. Do not count on the list to be complete or accurate and up to date. These resources change very frequently.
- Just because an agency or organization is on the hospital's list, does not endorse how good they are. Do your own homework about referrals on hospital list.
- Contact community resources and private agencies from hospital list while your loved one is in the hospital. Make arrangements while you have time.
- If returning home is not possible, talk to the social worker about other residential options such as assisted living, adult family group homes or nursing homes.
- Contact friends, neighbors, and other supports in your loved one neighborhood to determine how they can be of help. This may include stopping in every day for a few minutes, making a friendly phone call, etc.
- Speak with all the people involved in your loved ones care in the hospital. That means not only the doctor, but also the nurses, the personal care aides, and therapists, if appropriate. Different people will furnish you different bits of information.
- Hospital staffs are overworked and often in short supply. If you have concerns about the attention your loved one is receiving while in the hospital, consider hiring a private duty sitter agency to be stay with them. It may be money well spent.