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## Where to Start? For New Caregivers

**Start with the diagnosis.** Learning what to expect regarding a family member's diagnosis helps caregivers understand the disease process and plan realistically for the future. Almost any situation is worse if you are caught off guard. So start by gathering information and becoming informed and prepared.

**Talk about finances and healthcare wishes.** Having these conversations is difficult, but completing needed health care, financial and legal documents can help relieve anxiety and better prepare for the future.

**Consider inviting family and close friends to come together and discuss the care needed.** If possible, include the care receiver in this meeting. This meeting gives caregivers a chance to say what they need, plan for care and ask others for assistance.

**Take advantage of community resources.** These resources help relieve the workload and offer a break. Connect with caregiver educational programs that will increase knowledge and confidence.

**Find support.** The most important thing is to not become isolated or overwhelmed by trying to do everything alone as your responsibility increases. Online and in-person groups can be very helpful in connecting with others in the same circumstances. Polk Family Caregivers has a complete listing of all caregiver support groups that meet in Polk County.