

MANAGING A LOVED ONE'S FINANCES

Taking over as the caregiver for a loved one can be stressful for many different reasons, and it comes with a lot of unanswered questions. When should I take over? What needs to be taken care of? What would make them happy? However, as you begin planning to take over medical or life decisions for your loved one, have you also considered what to do with their finances?



1. When is it time to help? There are a few simple things you can do to determine if it's time. When you visit, check for unopened mail or undeposited checks lying around. These both become very common. This could be a sign that they are no longer able to go to the bank or may not understand why they should. Are everyday activities becoming difficult for them? If they start mentioning that they don't have any money or are asking for money, this might be a good time to start these conversations. It may be a daunting task at first, but it's important.

2. How to get the conversation started. No matter when these discussions happen, they're going to be difficult. But avoiding them altogether can lead to major problems down the road for you and your loved one. Start by coming up with a strategy — don't go into this conversation without a plan. You don't want to upset your loved one or make them uncomfortable. *Four Things to Know About Managing a Loved One's Finances* For many of us, discussing money is a very private issue. Reassure your loved one that this isn't about taking over their finances, it's to help set them up for future success. Think about who you want to be included in this conversation. Other family members? Any friends? It might be beneficial to have an outside perspective to help ease any tension or give any pieces of professional advice. If you can get help from a financial adviser or an attorney who can lead you in the right direction, that is a great start.

3. Where to begin. After you have these conversations, it is now time to take a closer look at your aging loved one's financial situation. This includes annual income, credit card debt and how much they receive in Social Security. Make sure you have an understanding of their monthly expenses, how much money is coming in and how much is going out. How are they paying their bills? Are they automatic? Being paid online? Or are they using paper checks? They might have a life insurance policy that you don't know about, and you don't want them to lose those benefits because it stops being funded. Gathering all of these documents and putting them somewhere secure is key.

4. Important questions to ask. Does your loved one have an estate plan? If not, they should. Many people think you have to be wealthy to have one, and that is not the case. Whether they are a multimillionaire or they have only a few bucks in the bank, they need an estate plan. I always recommend my clients find a good elder law attorney. They can collect the correct documents for you and your loved one, ensuring you are making the decisions, rather than the state, should they pass away. You also want to choose a healthcare power of attorney. This is something you would ideally want to do before it's too late so your loved one can pick that person on their own. This will ensure that you, or another family member, is legally empowered to view their medical records and decide where and how they are treated. This is a critical part of an overall financial plan. You don't want something to happen to a loved one and be unable to legally decide for them even though you know their wishes.

*To care for those who once
cared for us is one of the
highest honors.*

-Tia Walker

TIP OF THE MONTH:

CARING FOR AGING LOVED ONES

Taking care of aging loved ones can be both rewarding and challenging. Here are some tips to help you navigate this journey:

Educate Yourself: Learn about the specific challenges of aging, common health issues, and available resources. Understanding what to expect can help you better prepare.

Communicate: Keep open and honest communication with your loved ones. Discuss their wishes, preferences, and concerns regarding their care.

Seek Support: Don't hesitate to ask for help from other family members, friends, or support groups. Caregiving can be overwhelming, and it's important to have a support system.

Take Care of Yourself: Remember to prioritize your own physical and emotional well-being. Eat healthily, exercise regularly, and make time for activities you enjoy.

Set Realistic Expectations: Understand that you may not be able to do everything yourself. It's okay to seek professional help or consider alternative care options.

Plan Ahead: Anticipate future needs and plan accordingly. This may include legal and financial planning, as well as discussing end-of-life care preferences.

Stay Organized: Keep track of medications, appointments, and important documents. Consider using a calendar or caregiving app to stay organized.

Be Flexible: Be prepared for changes in your loved one's condition and adjust your caregiving approach as needed.

Celebrate Small Victories: Acknowledge and celebrate the small achievements and moments of joy that come with caregiving.

Seek Professional Advice: Consult with healthcare professionals, such as doctors and geriatric care managers, for guidance and support.

Remember, taking care of aging loved ones can be a deeply fulfilling experience, but it's important to take care of yourself and seek help when needed.



FINANCE 101: SIMPLIFYING THE COMPLEX MEDICAL AND DURABLE POWER OF ATTORNEY

Power of Attorney (POA) is a legal tool that allows you to appoint someone to make decisions on your behalf if you become unable to do so. There are two main types of POA that deal with different aspects of your life: medical and durable.

Medical Power of Attorney

Medical Power of Attorney (MPOA) is a document that lets you appoint a trusted person, known as your healthcare agent or proxy, to make medical decisions for you if you are unable to communicate. This can happen if you are unconscious, in a coma, or otherwise unable to make decisions for yourself.

Your healthcare agent will make decisions based on your wishes, as outlined in your living will or advance directive. It's important to choose someone who knows your values and preferences regarding medical treatment.

Durable Power of Attorney

Durable Power of Attorney (DPOA) is a broader document that covers financial and legal decisions. It remains in effect even if you become incapacitated. With a DPOA, you can appoint someone to manage your finances, pay bills, and make legal decisions on your behalf.

DPOA can take effect immediately or only when you become incapacitated, depending on your preferences. It's a good idea to discuss your financial and legal affairs with your chosen agent so they understand your wishes and can act in your best interest.

Medical and durable power of attorney are important documents that can help ensure your wishes are carried out if you are unable to make decisions for yourself. By appointing trusted individuals to act on your behalf, you can have peace of mind knowing that your affairs are in good hands. It's important to discuss your wishes with your agents and keep your documents up to date to reflect any changes in your circumstances or preferences.