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# SOCIAL SERVICES CORNER

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## ASK THE SOCIAL WORKER

**Question:** I am 86 years old and my daughter keeps telling me I can't live at home. She is pushing me to move into an assisted living facility. How can I make her understand I can take care of myself and I don't need assisted living?

**Answer:** I am glad you asked. All too frequently parents and their adult children have different opinions about the benefits of an assisted living facility. Adult children may focus on the safety aspects of an assisted living environment, ignoring the parent's wishes for independence, privacy or a flexible meal schedule. Often this debate can be settled by a geriatric care manager who has the knowledge and skills to create a unique care plan that will satisfy parents and adult children.

If you haven't already asked your daughter to write down what you can gain by moving to an assisted living facility, ask her to do it today. If the benefits she lists don't immediately change your mind, express your appreciation for her concern and let her know you will think it over and get back to her.

Hire a professional geriatric care manager to provide a "neutral" opinion when you think over the benefits. The National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers provides information about locating, screening and hiring a geriatric care manager. You can obtain this information by calling their offices at (520) 881-8008 or visiting their Web site at [www.caremanager.org](http://www.caremanager.org). Be sure to tell the geriatric

care manager why you want to stay at home and why you don't want assisted living. Most likely the geriatric care manager will ask to talk with your doctor about your health needs before creating your care plan. Invite your daughter to join you when the geriatric care manager is ready to discuss your options. Hopefully, you and your daughter will be relieved to have a professional settle your debate by identifying your needs and explaining how they can be satisfied.

Should the debate between you and your daughter continue, please consider an additional meeting with your geriatric care manager. Care options may be misinterpreted by either party and the geriatric care manager can help further clarify any unresolved concerns. Also, the geriatric care manager may refer you to a professional mediator who specializes in elder issues. This process, known as "elder mediation," is an excellent resource to help parents and adult children explore their opinions, clarify what is important and hopefully resolve their differences.

*Sources: Elder Decisions, [www.elderdecisions.com](http://www.elderdecisions.com); National Association of Professional Geriatric Care Managers, [www.caremanager.org](http://www.caremanager.org); Mediate.com, [www.mediate.com](http://www.mediate.com).*

## JOKE OF THE MONTH

**"I think that people who read tabloids  
deserve to be lied to."**

— *Jerry Seinfeld*

Laughter is known to boost the immune system, lower blood pressure, burn calories and release pleasure-inducing chemicals in the brain.

## CONTRIBUTORS

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## ARE YOU ELIGIBLE FOR A VETERANS AID AND ATTENDANCE BENEFIT?



Many veterans are unaware that the Department of Veterans Affairs provides two types of disability income benefits for veterans who served on active duty. The disability benefit known as “Compensation” is awarded to a veteran who incurred a disability, injury or an illness during service. Eligible veterans are usually awarded this benefit when they are discharged from service.

The other disability benefit is known as a “Pension” or “Veterans Aid and Attendance Benefit.” This benefit is available to all disabled veterans who served at least 90 days during a war. Veterans younger than age 65 must be totally disabled; however, veterans 65 years or older are considered disabled by age. To be eligible for benefits, veterans must also qualify as “low income” and have limited assets. If the veteran’s

income exceeds the maximum “Pension” amount, there is no benefit, but the veteran’s income can be reduced by unreimbursed medical expenses and long-term care costs. A primary residence, most personal property and automobiles are exempt when evaluating the veteran’s assets. It is not an easy process to qualify for a “Pension,” but those who think they might qualify should seek a free phone consultation from a veterans aid and attendance benefit consultant.

More details regarding these benefits, and a list of veterans aid and attendance benefit consultants, can be found at [www.veteransaidbenefit.org](http://www.veteransaidbenefit.org). It is illegal for these consultants to charge a fee to prepare, present and prosecute a claim, but they may charge a fee for advice.  Be sure to ask about fees before you use their services.

Sources: *National Care Planning Council*, [www.longtermcarelink.net](http://www.longtermcarelink.net); *Veterans A & A Benefits*, [www.veteransaidbenefits.org](http://www.veteransaidbenefits.org).

## NEW ADDITIONS TO THE MPPAF’S NATIONAL RESOURCE DIRECTORY

### [www.emedicinehealth.com](http://www.emedicinehealth.com)

This Web site is owned and operated by WebMD and part of the WebMD Network. It is a first aid and consumer health information site written by physicians for patients and consumers.

### [www.RxList.com](http://www.RxList.com)

This Web site is owned and operated by WebMD and part of the WebMD Network. It is an Internet drug index resource offering pharmaceutical information on brand and generic drugs.

### **Mayo Clinic:** [www.mayoclinic.com](http://www.mayoclinic.com)

The Mayo Clinic is a not-for-profit medical practice dedicated to the diagnosis and treatment of virtually every type of complex illness. It offers information regarding diseases, drugs, treatment decisions and healthy living.



### QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“ Now rumor travels faster,  
but it don’t stay put  
as long as truth. ”

— Will Rogers

### QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?

Call Karen Wiener, Manager of Social Services at (888) 994-3863, ext. 2390, or write to [karen@wrmail.org](mailto:karen@wrmail.org).