



## Caregiver Tip of the Month – June 2010

Notes from Area Agency on Aging of North Idaho

### ***When it's time to share the care of elderly parents -- Family meetings***

Family meetings help get everyone on the same page. They draw on the different perspectives and attitudes of family members about the options that will be discussed and choices that will be made.

Include all family members and give time to adjust to the group process. When you bring in your elderly parents, work to understand choices that they are considering. Together, you can provide good options and compromises. For example, they can bring in some home help, when one child feels they should go to an Assisted Living Facility and they want to remain independent at home.

- Choose a good facilitator from among you – someone with patience, some objectivity and decisiveness. Keep the communication flowing and leading to a constructive conclusion. Sometimes a family pastor, attorney, or even a favorite niece might be the right person to help facilitate the conversation.
- Write down everything that needs to be done—from daily care tasks like bathing, dressing, and washing dishes to shopping, transportation to medical appointments, to social activities. Helping to manage finances, pay bills, review insurance coverage might also be a necessity as well.
- Once you identify tasks by how often or when they need doing--daily, weekly, or intermittently, everyone can sign up for what they realistically can handle. Then you can identify care gaps. See what's left. Consider enlisting friends, neighbors, and hired help. There is a growing availability of geriatric care managers as well.
- Have someone be responsible for keeping in touch with family members via email, face book pages or stay in touch by conference calls or web sites that are set up for that purpose.

Families are all busy in these times, but with a team of family and friends, a lot of help can be provided without over burdening one person. The meetings and the subsequent plan can provide rich family experiences.

Contact Betsy Bullard, Area Agency on Aging, at 667-3179, ext. 222, or email [infoassist@aaani.org](mailto:infoassist@aaani.org) to find out more about these options and other resources. For expanded caregiver tips go to our website at [www.aaani.org](http://www.aaani.org) and click on Family Caregiving on the left hand side of the home page.