Making an Aging Plan: Village Role

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Adapted with permission of Peter Engstrom who developed this concept and Maureen Caviola.

- Estate Plan
- Advance directive
- Trust document
- Will
- Last wishes discussed & documented
- Funds for care

Everything is in Order

- None of us experiences aging until it happens
- We & family may be prepared for death
- We’re not prepared for changes, unanticipated challenges & decisions they require

Unanticipated bumps in the road: Uh,oh, Not as planned

- Staying connected with distant family may be difficult
- Sharing experiences & concerns with others positively impacts on mental & physical health

Unanticipated bumps in road: Uh,oh, Not as planned

- We rarely look at our own aging future – we plan to do that when we need to
- Deliberate planning can help us think through common issues & problems of aging
- A Master Aging Plan can be a helpful framework

Master Aging Plan (MAP)

- Constructing the MAP with peers can help to think through issues & make decisions
- Discussion with peers creates trust
- This trust develops a peer support system among people facing similar issues
- Peer discussion enables examination of range of solutions

Master Aging Plan (MAP)

- To facilitate development of a plan, the Village may:
  - Introduce the topic at a Village event
  - Organize follow-up working sessions
  - Develop trust relationships in small workgroups
  - Encourage groups to share approaches and ideas
  - Encourage participants to share plans with larger group

Role of the Village

- To answer questions and implement aging plan:
  - Invite resource specialists to meet with participants,
    - Home modification experts and contractors
    - Financial planners/advisors and lenders
    - Ergonomic experts and design professionals
    - Older driver assessors and advisors
    - Building owners if apartments or condo
    - Home organization specialists
    - Technology experts

Role of the Village

- Identify documents: locate documents, develop instructions. Your executor, agent or family member will need to understand them to carry out your wishes
- List the documents in your MAP, copy the document or the first page of each for inclusion in your plan, & identify where the original is kept.

Getting Started

- Bank statements
- Bank trust dept.
- Birth certificate
- Burial plot(s)
- Car registration
- Checking account(s)
- Death certificates
- Deeds/mortgage info
- Discharge papers
- Divorce papers
- Drivers' licenses
- Durable power of attorney
- Funeral instructions/plans
- Health insurance & cards
- Household bills/contract
- Income tax info/returns
- IRAs/Keoghs

Important Documents

- Insurance(household, liability, umbrella)
- Living wills
- Marriage licenses
- Medicare cards
- Medical instructions
- Mortgages/deeds
- Nursing home contracts
- Passports
- PASSWORDS
- Pension papers
- Prepaid burial trusts
- Pet info
- Real estate taxes
- Religious contacts
- Renter's lease
- Safe Deposit Box #/key
- Savings acct #/location
- Stocks/bonds
- Tax returns
- Trust statements

Important Documents (contd)

- Identify people to be involved in decisions, e.g.
  - If I am incapacitated, these people should be consulted about health or other decisions regarding my personal well-being. Specific decision-making authority for advance health directives is listed in powers of attorney.
  - Spouse, children, friends, peers identified in this plan
  - Notify people whom you want to be involved & give them copy of this plan

Contact List

- HIPPA form allowing access to your health records
- Identify decisions that must be made before you experience unanticipated bump in the road
- What documents need to be put in place?
- Designate somebody to handle your financial affairs if you become incapacitated
- Decide whether you want a geriatric care manager to be involved
- What are your financial resources for lifetime care?

Prepare

- Bumps in the road generate hard questions
- Understanding them before they occur helps deal with them
- Discussions with peers allows us to share our thinking & may help us find answers

Answering hard questions

- If you are in a medical facility, what to you want to do when you leave: Go home, Go to another facility, Go with a family member, Go with a friend
- Do you have a near and long-term care plan? Have you discussed it with those who will help you implement it?
- What long-term outcome do you anticipate after this bump?
- If you need care, e.g. 24 hour care, do you have resources to pay for it? If not, what are your options to find money?

Answering hard questions

- Is your home suitable for aging in place?
- If not, do you have resources for alterations?
- If not, what are your options & which is the best one?

Living in your home

- Are you in charge of your own financial resources?
- Do you have financial planning documents & a financial planner?
- If not you, who would make your financial decisions?
- If you are mentally incapacitated, who would be in charge of your financial resources?
- If you become physically incapacitated & need 24 hour care, could you pay for it & for how long?

Financial Resources

- What are your income streams?
- Specify what bank accounts are used to pay bills
- Specify who has access to each of your accounts
- Specify bills on automatic withdrawal, those you initiate, which are paid electronically & which by regular mail
- Where do you keep passwords to your accounts?

Bill paying

- To pay bills, must you move assets from one account to another, e.g from savings to checking accounts?
- Do you keep a master calendar of bill payments that your designated bill payer can use?
- Do you have a priority order for paying bills?
- Do you have a procedure for periodically reviewing & updating a list of recurring bills that must be paid?

Bill paying

- Will maintenance costs drive your decision to stay in your home in the long-term?
- To what extent are you able to maintain your own home?
- Do you depend on professional tradespeople to fix problems?

Home maintenance/alteration

- Do others help with home maintenance, e.g. friends, neighbors?
- Are there maintenance options now that would influence your ability to stay in your home, e.g. relocating washer/dryer, adding/modifying bathroom, roof replacement, stair lift?

Home maintenance/alteration

- Are you able to drive safely without limitations?
- Do you have the mobility to do what you want to do?
- If you become unable to drive temporarily or permanently, what transportation options do you have?
- If you become unable to drive, will you be able to do what you want to do?

Driving

- Are you a caregiver for a family member?
- If yes, do you do it alone or with assistance from others?
- If you are living with a spouse or significant other, what will you do if that person dies or becomes incapacitated?

Caregiver responsibilities

- Construct a list that lays out things to take care of
- There is no one way to do it – do what fits your style
- You can change your plan at any time
- The purpose is to help you & your family be prepared for the future

Develop an index to help you organize your affairs

Sample checklist

- An example of a checklis
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- Debt & emergency cash
- Establishing emergency account
- Home mortgage
- Home equity loan
- Other emergency resources
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- Estate Planning
- Wills & revocable trusts
- Powers of Attorney
- Medical directives
- End of Life Plan
- Beneficiary designations
- Life insurance
- Parents
- Children
- Where documentation filed
- Safe deposit boxes
- Bank account information
- Mutual fund distribution
- Charitable contributions
- Contribution to retirement plans
- Income taxes – copies/location
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- Investments
- Periodic account reviews
- Different type of fund options
- Monthly investment plans
- Required distributions
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- Insurance needs
- Disability
- Life
- Property & casualty
- Long Term Care
- Medicare & Medicaid
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- Home preparation & safety
- Doorways (width)
- Stair rails
- Handrails (shower, steps)
- Lighting
- Storage
- Electrical outlets
- Laundry room
- Smoke detectors
- Kitchen
- Halls
- Handles (levers work best)
- Exterior pathways
- Exterior ramps
- Home care options/decisions
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- Personal issues
- Driving
- Appropriate speed
- Judging distance
- Night vision issues/glare
- Getting lost
- Attention span
- Accidents
- Transportation options other than driving
- Metro Access
- Driver (paid)
- Volunteer organizations
- Public transportation
- Personal assistance
  - Service agency help
  - Village volunteers
  - Church group volunteers
  - Public assistance
  - Private aide
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- MAP information is sensitive: talking about it with others requires trust
- In developing MAP, you may find something about your own situation that will help others when shared
- Deciding who sees your MAP can be complicated
- Start with the easy things & discuss the difficult ones with peers

Getting started may be hard but is important