

# Life Care Planning

## *Elder Law of East Tennessee*

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Caregiving and planning for a future that includes the long-term care of an elder or person with disability is overwhelming, often draining the whole family's time, energy, and resources. Navigating the spectrum of choices can feel daunting. Without expert guidance, many families of elder adults agonize over decisions and worry about how they will finance long-term care. Meanwhile, the elder suffers from inadequate care and feels like a burden on loved ones. But with a Life Care Plan in place, it doesn't have to be this way.

**What is a Life Care Plan?** Life Care Planning is a new approach to tackling the legal, financial, and health care challenges of long-term care by combining traditional legal services with creative care planning services offered by a professional care coordinator. We assess our clients' specialized needs and provide guidance to secure the best long-term care available. Life Care Planning is all about helping clients find, get, and pay for the long-term care they need.

**How does a Life Care Plan work?** Life Care Planning merges legal planning techniques with careful evaluation and monitoring of physical, psychological, and financial needs of the client and family. It begins with the attorney's assessment of the client's legal and financial situation and the care coordinator's assessment of the client's functional ability, living situation, costs of care in the community, and resources available to pay for care. Then our team develops a plan for the family to find the services that will maximize independence while meeting all of the client's needs for support. The Life Care Plan is an ongoing relationship between the client and our team which evolves to meet the client's changing circumstances as his or her condition progresses.

**What is a care coordinator?** Every Life Care Planning client works with a care coordinator, a professional who becomes a single point of contact for all care needs. The care coordinator is available to address emergencies, provide guidance through difficult transitions, relieve caregiver burnout, make facility recommendations, attend care planning meetings, and advocate for the client with medical professionals. The coordinated care approach ensures better treatment across the board and helps the client and family learn about opportunities for making the best use of available resources to maximize quality of life.

**What are the benefits of Life Care Planning?** An integrated approach to align financial needs with care objectives, a Life Care Plan restores peace of mind for the whole family. Caregivers receive the guidance they need to make informed decisions about the long-term care of their loved one. When the elder client receives the right care sooner, he or she is able to remain independent longer, which increases quality of life while reducing the burden on caregivers. Furthermore, the client's and family members' financial security are protected. The whole family can breathe easy knowing that their Life Care Planning team is stretching their money and coordinating the best long-term care available.

**How do I know if a Life Care Plan is right for me?** The best time to get a Life Care Plan in place is before a crisis strikes, when you have plenty of time to consider your options and make the best strategic use of your resources. If you have started to think about long-term care needs because of a trigger event such as a dementia diagnosis or fall, now is the time to lay the groundwork for your future long-term care needs. But if you are already in the middle of a crisis situation, a Life Care Plan could still go a long way toward addressing your needs and restoring balance to your life.



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# **A Life Care Plan with Elder Law of East Tennessee Includes:**

## **Legal Services and Planning**

- Consultations with your elder law attorney
- Drafting and implementation of an Action Plan specific to your needs
- Related legal and estate planning services
- Assistance in making decisions about asset transfers, gifts, etc. to protect resources
- Representation through the administrative level in pursuit of Medicaid long-term care benefits to protect your assets from Medicaid estate recovery and pursuit of increased spousal resource/income allowance, where appropriate
- Free assistance with preparation and processing of a VA claim

## **Public Benefits Planning**

- Assistance from our Public Benefits Advisor regarding when to file your applications and when to achieve eligibility
- Help preparing the application and gathering supporting documentation
- Guidance and explanations throughout the application process
- Follow up and advocacy with the government agency regarding eligibility

## **Care Coordination**

- Guidance through the long-term care maze
- Education and recommendations about long-term care options, including help finding care providers and referrals to community-based resources and support services; assistance with residential placement; evaluating placement options under consideration; and/or level of care transitions
- On-site assessments of housing circumstances and functional ability
- Assessment of current care strategies and development of a personalized long-term care plan for improving the quality of care and quality of life
- Coordination among all health care providers, personal care support, and advocacy with service providers to ensure high quality care
- Guidance on managing a disabled spouse's disease process
- Assistance with applications for public benefits and community services
- Intervention and advocacy in a health care crisis
- Support at care planning meetings, routine visits, and chart review for institutionalized clients

## **Family Meeting Facilitation**

- Assistance with collaborative decision-making for an elder or person with disability
- Facilitation of healthy and productive conversations while sorting through difficult choices
- Guidance from a professional with experience in family mediation and conflict management
- Advice to avoid and/or resolve family conflict while reaching the most satisfactory outcome