

Seven Steps to Securing Help

Personal Safety Nets ® 2009

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1. **Define what's going on:** It's easy to feel uncomfortable when changes occur or things befall us, but if you don't tell people what's going on, how can you expect them to help?
2. **Get organized:** Try to create a needs list and/or organize what you specifically need, when you think you'll need it, and who might be able to help in different areas – make sure helpers or drivers or those assisting with a specific task all don't come on the same day!
3. **Ask for help:** It can be humbling in our individualistic society to admit we can't handle everything on our own. But if we don't ask for help, we're less likely to get it. Just remember, we all need to give, so give others a chance to participate. This is a tough task so practice, practice, practice.
4. **Be specific in requests:** It's a lot easier for someone to respond if your request is clearly defined and they know what you want or need, when it's wanted, and what you can accept.
5. **Don't take "no" personally:** Sometimes people don't have the time to help, or they may shy away from a particular need. A request may bring up uncomfortable feelings, or can remind someone of their own problems and fragility. Either way, it's important not to take it personally when someone says no.
6. **Learn to receive help graciously:** It can be harder than you think to let others help – it sometimes means giving up control or responsibility – and it takes practice to do this well.
7. **Remain a giver:** While it's important to accept help graciously, it's also important, even through change, injury or illness, to continue to be givers. We can offer kind words, smiles, and a continued interest in our friends' lives. In fact, shifting some of our focus to others helps lift our spirits, an important part of moving ahead with our own lives.