

Navigating Family Dynamics around the Holidays: How to Best Manage Festivities with Ageing Parents



THE PANDEMIC EDITION



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Adapting to Changes



Overview

- Family Dynamics
- Family Dynamics and Ageing Parents...and then there was COVID
- Considering where and when to have conversations with and about our ageing parents...and what exactly is Advance Care Planning
- General Guidelines about celebrating holidays and ageing parents...and then there was COVID

What do we mean by “Family Dynamics?”



Video Clip #4



Holidays are a time for Reflection

- Sometimes the holidays are the time when we see changes in our parents and feel the need to act
- Every holiday season we see concerned children dropping their ageing parents at the emergency room because they have not been coping well
- Holidays for many are an already stressful time and are not necessarily the best time for drastic changes
- A health crisis or new diagnosis of illness can add to our sense of urgency to make changes



Video Clip #3

Importance of Family Conversations

- Holidays are often a time of pressure for many to attend to many activities and create memories and traditions
- COVID-19 restrictions give us the opportunity to pause and reconsider
- If you are noticing differences or changes with your ageing parents **check in with them**
- Talk to siblings and see what they notice
- Share ideas, concerns
- Bring out of town siblings and family members up to date
- Be prepared to listen
- Create some ground rules to ensure for a respectful discussion and be prepared to LISTEN—your perspective is not the only one
- Remember Capable Parents (just like all of us) have the right to make their own decisions—even if we don't like them

Video Clip # 7

Plan a time to talk and follow up after the holidays

- Knowing what your ageing parents want takes the pressure off the children to mind read—better yet, take the opportunity to talk to your significant others about your wishes
- Advance Directives are so important; they ensure that substitute decision makers “get it right” and respect your values and wishes
- Holidays may be a time to flag issues but may not be the time to have these conversations
- Make a firm commitment to follow up and talk to your parents about what is important to them

Video Clip # 1

Video Clip My ACP community

Holiday Celebration Considerations

- Follow public health guidelines
- How are your family members interpreting the public health guidelines?
- What do your parents want? What is comfortable for you? What can you influence?
- Is your parent from a single person household? Is there more than one sibling?
- Manage your expectations



General Guidelines

- Keep routines
- Reduce noise and confusion
- Modify traditions and adjust expectations
- Tone down decorations, flashing lights and clutter
- Do not rearrange furniture
- Never leave burning candles unattended, use alternatives





Simple Ideas to Consider

- One household gatherings
- Porch visits (it may be too cold)
- Walks (if possible and distanced)
- Use technology if appropriate with one person acting as moderator
- Share photos, send a meal, online games
- Do the same thing each night of Channukah (why not?)
- Be aware of hearing and sight limitations
- Old fashioned cards and letters are good too!



Video Clip (sharing a meal)



Take your own Temperature



- Remember that the holidays can be stressful for all, especially if a loved one is coping with serious illness or demonstrating cognitive or physical changes related to ageing
- Be mindful about when and where to have conversations with your family about important matters
- At this time when we cannot hug or touch those we love it can be extremely difficult
- Meditation, exercise, gratitude are all
- ways we can enhance our coping



Thank-You

ZOOM PARTY Aunt Judy's 100th Birthday Bash December 5, 2020

