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

THE PANDEMIC EDITION

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Adapting to Changes

Helping fund your parents in their retirement is about more than just money!

It reverses the dynamic of the whole relationship.

I only asked him to tidy his room!

Why can't you leave me alone...you're ruining my life!
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?”

- Dignity
- Empowerment
- Respect
- Diversity
- Trust
- Inclusion
- Advocacy
- Confidentiality
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 done 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