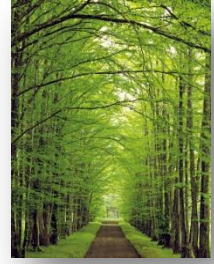


Geriatric Connections...Support and Services for Older Adults



When to Refer a Client

Even though you may be genuinely concerned about elderly person or their caregiver, and interested in helping them, you may find yourself in situations where it would be better to refer them to other resources. Circumstances that might necessitate a referral include:

- The problem is more serious than you feel comfortable handling.
- You are either extremely busy, or are experiencing stress in your own life, and are unable or unwilling to handle other requests for help.
- You have talked to a person and helped as much as you can, but further assistance is needed.
- You think your personal feelings about the person will interfere with your objectivity.
- The person admits that there is a problem, but doesn't want to talk to you about it.
- The person asks for information or assistance that you are unable to provide.
- The person demonstrates signs of depression, anxiety or caregiver burnout.

Let the person know your reasons for making a referral (e.g., lack of time, conflict of interest, limited training) and emphasize your concern that he/she does get help from an appropriate source. It may help the person to know that you support his/her desire to seek help.

How to make a referral

Contact Geriatric Connections by phone, email or completing the referral form link. Intake information will be gathered to accurately define your client's counseling needs.

Phone: 269-313-4002

E-mail: www.GeriatricConnections@yahoo.com

If an older person or family caregiver is reluctant to seek professional help

Many people believe that only very disturbed people seek counseling, so your referral might be interpreted as a comment on the severity of the problem. Reassure the person that therapists at Geriatric Connections work with people with a wide range of concerns. Problems need not reach crisis proportions for persons to benefit from professional help. In fact, it is much easier to work on problems if they are addressed before they reach crisis level. Normalizing the process of seeking help may be especially helpful for persons who may not be comfortable with psychological counseling. Reluctant persons might also be relieved to know that they can speak with a therapist on a one-time basis without making a commitment to on-going therapy. Furthermore, any contact and information shared by the person is kept strictly confidential within Geriatric Connections and will not be disclosed to adult children or even you, except with the person's written permission. Finally, it is important to acknowledge, validate and discuss the person's real fears and concerns about seeking help. It takes considerable courage to face oneself and acknowledge one's limitations. In some cases, you may find that the person has already sought counseling services elsewhere, and was unsatisfied with the experience. There are many reasons why counseling may not be successful in a given situation. Please encourage the person to consider giving counseling another try, perhaps with a different counselor.

While it is important to care about the emotional well-being of persons, we cannot make their decisions for them, and counseling is always a personal choice. Occasionally even your best efforts to encourage a person to seek counseling will be unsuccessful. If the person resists referral and you remain uncomfortable with the situation, contact Geriatric Connections to discuss your concern.