

SENIOR LIVING GUIDE

A TRIBUTE TO THE HOLIDAYS



Tribute at the Glen in Woodbridge celebrated "A December to Remember" last month with a special community event in honor and remembrance of loved ones with dementia. Residents, their families, the Tribute team and community members enjoyed live performances from Frozen Princesses and Classic Christmas Carolers, made crafts in Santa's Workshop, met Santa and the Grinch, and enjoyed a train ride through light displays provided by local businesses and organizations.

Should I Be Concerned about My Elderly Parents?

» BY JULIE ROSE

Monitoring changes in an aging loved one's condition is very important. Even subtle changes can be cause for concern.

If you live near your parents, you can observe and monitor any changes. If you don't live nearby, you may want to arrange with someone you trust to visit your parents periodically and assess the following:

- Are your parents keeping up with their personal appearance? Are their clothes clean? Are they maintaining basic hygiene such as bathing and brushing teeth?
- How is their weight? Losing weight without trying may be a cause for concern. It may indicate dementia, depression, loss of taste or smell or the development of underlying physical conditions.
- Do you observe personality changes? Look for variations from what has been normal in the past. Significant personality changes can be an early sign of dementia or Alzheimer's Disease. A loss of interest in favorite activities and hobbies or social isolation can indicate physical and mental decline.



JULIE ROSE

- While we all have lapses in memory, are your parents experiencing the inability to follow directions and answer simple questions? Are they getting lost in familiar places? Are they confused about people, places and time? Are they forgetting to pay bills?
- What is the state of your parents' home? Are there signs that your parents may be having trouble taking care of themselves? Is there spoiled food in the refrigerator, dirty laundry piling up, garbage not taken out, and the like?
- Are your parents becoming frail? Is there a significant decline in their physical mobility? Are they having difficulty going up and down stairs? Do they exhibit an unbalanced gait? Are they having difficulty standing up or sitting down? Can they maintain their balance?
- Are your parents taking their medications as prescribed? Are they able to explain their medication schedule to you? Are they attending doctor's appointments regularly? As people age, it's easy to let medical conditions fall to the wayside.

Coming to terms with the reality of a loved one's mental or physical decline is challenging but if you observe changes or decline it's important to address the situation promptly. Many options are

available to provide your parents with the support they need to ensure their quality of life. The time to find trusted, caring support is before a crisis occurs – not in the middle of it.

Julie Rose is chief executive officer of Paladin Life Care. If you are concerned or have questions, reach Paladin at info@paladinlifecare.com or (703) 879-6992.



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