



## Caring with confidence

Taking care of ourselves is a priority when we want to live well. We try to make good decisions minute-to-minute -- parking further from the door, choosing fruits instead of pastries or taking that medication as prescribed.

We tend not to think about the long range decisions that can also help us maximize our future well-being and independence. We often don't plan ahead for potential transitions that seems too difficult, instead waiting for a crisis to force us to act. When we do this, options become more limited and decision-making more stressful. Consider taking the time early on to paint a picture of your caregiving situation so that you may better understand your long-range options, and lay the groundwork for choices that will feel right for both of you.

### Get clarity on your situation.

The million-dollar question for everyone thinking about their own aging or caring for someone who is older seems to be...*Do I need to make a change?* Any type of change or new experience will trigger stress. Gaining a clear perspective on the entire situation can reduce the stress of uncertainty and increase your confidence about decisions you make. This online decision tool <http://tools.roobrik.com/familymeans/care> helps older adults and their families make a muddy scenario

become clearer by summarizing the present situation in a Care Fit Report that includes a rundown of care needs, finances, options and timeline. This report, which can be shared with your team of support, can also be a first step toward connecting with helpful community resources.

### Put yourself first.

Learn what services are available in your community to help take care of yourself along this caregiving journey. For example, does your health insurance plan offer discounts at the local fitness center? Is there a veteran's benefit you could tap into for caregiver support or respite? Understanding what caregiver services are available for *you* is important – think support groups, education classes, caregiver coaching. Even if you don't use them right away, doing research can help you feel more in control.



### Look for resources when you don't need them.

Looking more closely at areas that may be a concern (housing, transportation, care needs, etc.,) is easier when you don't need to make a quick decision. Find out more about that meal delivery

*Life happens between an inhale and an exhale ~ Briana Z. Nevada*

## **FamilyMeans presents What's new with Medicare in 2019?**

Alternative options that may work best for you with  
upcoming changes to COST plans

**Tuesday, August 7, 2018**

**2:00pm - 4:00pm**

FamilyMeans Desch Room

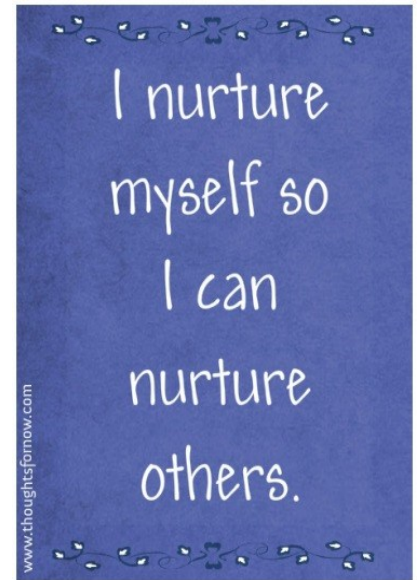
1875 Northwestern Ave. S Stillwater, MN 55082

### **Lake Elmo Memory Café meets the second Monday**

of each month from 9:00am-10:30am at Lake Elmo Inn  
3442 Lake Elmo Avenue N.

### **Woodbury Memory Café meets the second Tuesday**

of each month from 1:00pm-2:30pm at R.H. Stafford Library  
8595 Central Park Place.



service your friend mentioned. Call the phone number on the side of the mini-bus you see at the shopping mall and ask how their service works. Take a tour of the apartment building that intrigues you. Being curious rather than panicked may allow you or the person you care for to be open-minded about options and then more ready to make use of services if and when they're needed. Sometimes there are even non-binding steps you can take now – starting a registration process or getting on a waiting list – that will make for a smoother transition later.

This is also a good opportunity to start conversations with people about likes and dislikes, values and wishes, and what living well means to you. By talking about what you discover as you look around at resources, you'll be sharing with each other important insights about what may work best in the future.

### **Discuss your thoughts and ideas.**

Take a step toward living well at any age. Have open conversations with those you trust and those who may be helping you in the future. Having other individuals aware of your wishes and values can help them become better supporters and advocates for you, should you need it.

### **Mark milestones to trigger potential action.**

What are the markers along the way that would cause you to consider a change of some sort? A decline or injury to your body? Financial circumstances? Inability to drive safely? Sometimes important signals are right in front of our eyes, but are difficult to see because we're so close. Identifying these signposts ahead of time, and talking with others about them, can increase the chances that you'll recognize them when you reach them. You can always re-evaluate the situation then.

Produced by Caregiving & Aging at FamilyMeans. Caregiving services include support groups, education, coaching and respite care. FamilyMeans also provides Counseling & Therapy, Financial Solutions, Youth Development and educational programs that strengthen and support families and the community.

*Simplicity boils down to two steps: Identify the essential. Eliminate the rest.~ Leo Babauta*