

# CustomElderCare®

Quality Elder-Care Resources and Services

CustomElderCare promotes the quality of life and dignity of people who require care to survive.

Our vision is to remake social views about people in care by providing guidance, resources, and quality tools to individual caregivers, corporations, and social institutions that can make a difference.

Our *CustomElderCare Good Caregiver* tools rely on the best current science, which shows that everyone benefits when caregiving actions are based on the values of the person in care.



[customeldercare.com](http://customeldercare.com)  
[info@customcaretrust.com](mailto:info@customcaretrust.com)

*“Every family can benefit from the straightforward practical tools offered by CustomElderCare® that organize and foster easy and clear communication about the hundreds of details associated with caring for a loved one.”*

Dr. Robert B. Santulli, Director of Geriatric Psychiatry  
Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center  
Lebanon, New Hampshire, USA

Copyright 2012  
All rights reserved worldwide



Quality of Life.  
For Those in Care.  
For Those who Care.

# CUSTOMELDERCARE GOOD CAREGIVER PRINCIPLES



## Principles of Quality Elder Care

## Core Principles

### PROMOTE ALTRUISM

To promote altruism in caregiving is to do everything possible to ensure that caregiving actions recognize and honor the right of the person in care to have a say over the look and feel of his or her daily life. To promote altruism is to maintain as much familiarity and comfort as possible for the person in care by making sure that caregiving actions are relevant and sensitive to the values, feelings, attitudes, preferences, and traditions or habits of the person in care.

### RELY ON EVIDENCE

To rely on evidence in caregiving is to base caregiving actions on knowledge about the person in care: what he or she would do if able to function independently. *Direct evidence* comes from the expressed wishes of the person in care or knowledge about his or her past actions. *Indirect evidence* comes from observations in shared experiences or dialogue with significant others in a position to inform, such as family, friends, associates, service providers, etc. In short, to rely on evidence is to take the guesswork out of caregiving.

## Quality Task Principles

**1: Set standards for ethical and decent care.** Standards like kindness, patience, and honesty are universal. More specific standards are shaped by the needs, values, and preferences of people in care. Uphold standards set by the person in care.

**2: To respect the present, recognize the past.** To provide relevant and sensitive services, understand the life journey, past experiences, and accomplishments of the person in care.

**3: Be clear about required caregiving tasks.** Create clear instructions and guidelines for carrying out the required tasks while also encouraging and assisting the person in care to do as much as possible in order to sustain capacity.

**4: Foster dignity in grooming.** Take special pains to ensure dignity in all aspects of grooming for the person in care, and show respect for his or her modesty.

**5: Safeguard physical health.** In addition to assuring the best health of the person in care, tune in to his or her emotions and attitudes toward medical care. When in contact with medical providers, advocate for sensitivity and respect.

**6: Attend to lifestyle.** Help the person in care make the best possible use of passing hours, maintain a stimulating lifestyle and bring joy into the household; support spiritual needs.

**7: Think of food as more than sustenance.** Understand that the meaning of food and drink vary from person to person; deliver meals that reflect his or her preferences and traditions.

**8: Recognize the place called "home."** Make sure that all the little touches that signal *home* to the person in care are carefully preserved and that necessary changes are made only in accordance with his or her approval.

**9: Put it in writing.** Make sure everyone on the caregiving team is clear and "on the same page" about service expectations by developing three important types of agreements: terms of work, confidentiality, and exit.

**10: A picture is worth a thousand words.** Use photos creatively – as both reminiscence and reminder for the person in care, and to show what things "look like."

## Quality Relationship Principles

**11: Think of caregiving service as collaborative.** Research shows that when people participate in their destiny, they live longer, healthier, happier, and more productive lives.

**12: Meet the person in care where s/he is "at."** Tuning into someone's mind set goes a long way in understanding needs and providing relevant service.

**13: To help a person in care move forward, be empathic with where he or she is "at."** Agreeing that moving ahead is difficult for someone goes a long way in helping him/her feel understood, protected, and assisted in making that step.

**14: Respect the preferences of the person in care.** Caregiving service is about accommodating the preferences and comfort of the person in care, not those of caregivers.

**15: Think of so-called combative behavior as legitimate expression.** So-called combative behavior should be interpreted as an expression of fear, confusion, or misunderstanding. Physical expression never happens in a vacuum; it is usually a person's means of "last resort."

**16: Pay close attention to body language.** People often express themselves with their bodies (a look or body posture, etc.), especially when they worry about the impact of saying what they feel or when their capacity for speech deserts them.

**17: Harness the strengths of the person in care.** Pay special attention to and find creative ways to build on what people can do rather than their limits.

**18: Engage, invite, and suggest.** Help people in care maintain their dignity by treating them with kid gloves.

**19. Replace the unsuccessful with distraction or diversion.** Think with this mindset: *If not now, then later, or If not in this way, then in some other way.*

**20. Review, test, and retest all assumptions, perceptions, and conclusions.** Always test what you think you know, understand, or believe you have clearly communicated.

**21. Respect the person in your care as your elder.** If you are the caregiver, chances are that you are the "young one" here. Adults in care should not be infantilized.

**22. Remember that everyone is different in some ways.** No two people in the universe are alike. The only thing people in care have in common is that they depend on the good will of others.