

Concierge Post-op Caregiver

Hello. My name is Christina Miles. I am an experienced certified nursing assistant, concierge post op caregiver, Founder of Caregiver Academy, and the author of "Intentional Caregiving: Ten Principles on How To Become an Exceptional CNA."

Throughout my ten years and counting as a caregiver, I have developed a deep passion for helping other people. That is why, during Covid, I started my company, Caregiver Academy. I also wrote and self-published a book on Amazon called "Intentional Caregiving." The mission of my company is to teach caregivers and healthcare professionals how to level up their care game.

Along with coaching caregivers online, I offer concierge post op caregiving services for people who are recovering from cosmetic and physical rehabilitative surgical procedures. I travel to my client's home, Airbnb, or hotel, and care for them while they are recovering from having a surgical procedure done. I feel very honored to have had the pleasure of caring for hundreds of patients and their family members from all over the world.

Caregiving is universal. Everyone, at some point in their lives, is going to need to be taken care of or need to take care of someone else. It is vital to learn the art of caregiving. My goal is to provide anyone who is interested in nursing with community, resources, and educational caregiving content that will hopefully help them along the way. I know that this industry can be challenging at times, but it can also be extremely rewarding.

With the innovation of modern-day medicine and technology, we as a society are living longer. In order to ensure that our senior citizens receive exceptional, dignified, and efficient care, it is crucial that we have a plan in place.

Here are 4 steps to creating a long-term care plan for your aging parents.

1. Have a family meeting.

The first thing I advise my clients on when I coach them on how to create a road map for long-term care planning is to have a family meeting. Whoever the care plan is being designed for and the individuals who will be providing the care should all be present, either in person or virtually.

Think of it like a sports team. Before the game can even start, you have to pick the players, which players are going to be on the field, and which ones are going to be sitting on the bench, waiting patiently to substitute in when the occasion calls for it.

If the individual who you are putting the care plan together for is cognitively aware, make sure that they are involved in making their wants and needs known during the meeting. Ask your parents, spouse, or adult children what kind of future they envision for themselves.

During this meeting, you need to figure out who is going to be the captain (primary caregiver) of the team. Also, who is going to be the co-captain? The majority of the time, if

one spouse declines in health and needs care, their spouse will usually become the primary caretaker and one of their children (if they have any) will become co-captain.

Most often the role of captain is given to or is filled by women, but men can fill this role as well. Caregiving has no gender. I remember once there was a gentleman whom I cared for, a kind man. He and his wife had ten children. Nine of them were boys and one of them was a girl. The man was in a physical therapy rehab facility recovering from a recent fall while his wife was in a different nursing home that was nearby.

Most of the brothers took it upon themselves to appoint their sister as primary caretaker of their mother and father without discussing it with her first. When they informed her of their joint decision, the main reason why they picked her was because she was a woman. That made her best suited for the job.

The sister reluctantly accepted the position, but made her feelings known that she was not happy about it. The woman, who lived an hour away, had two small children, worked full time as a teacher, and was married. She was now expected on top of all of that to drive to her parents twice a week to oversee that they were being properly taken care of.

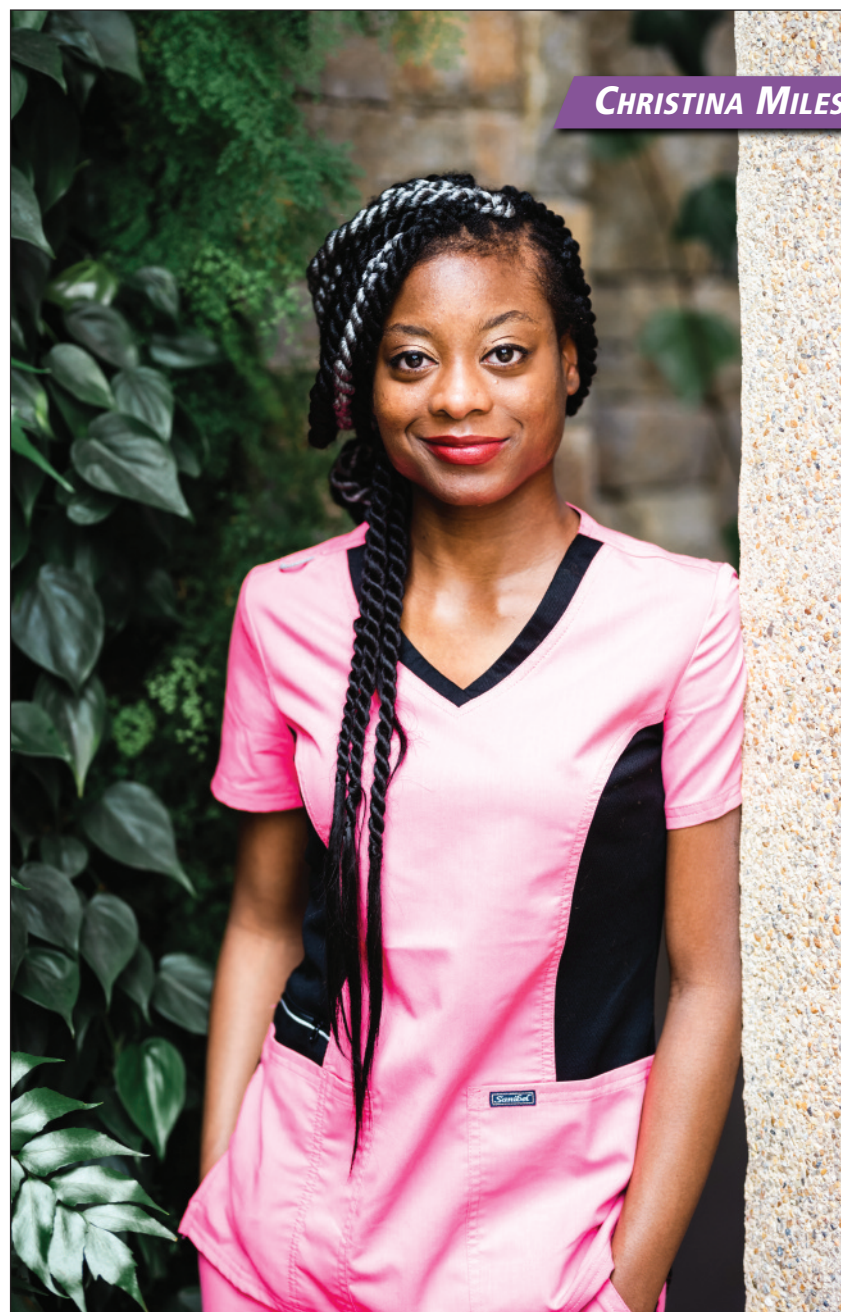
Several of her brothers, on the other hand, lived close by to their parents, worked from home, didn't have children, and were either divorced or single. They refused to have any involvement with the care of their parents. Their explanation for why they couldn't help their sister was because they had to work.

This created immense tension between the siblings. I share this story with you so that you can see why planning in advance is so vital. If the caregiving tasks would have been distributed more fairly amongst the siblings, it would have been an easier experience for the entire family.

Make sure that the players (siblings) who are sitting on the bench are utilized regularly. A great way for them to do this is to actively be supporting the captain and the co-captain as much as possible. This could be little, but much appreciated, acts of care. Such as picking up your parents' medicine from the pharmacy on your way to visiting them, helping to setup automated online banking systems on your parent's phones, and taking over the caregiving tasks so that the primary caregiving family member can get some rest for a few hours.

How the care team is set up differs based on everyone's individual family structure. But I feel it works best for the roles to be filled by opposite strengths. An example would be if your father is the primary caregiver who is doing the bulk of the physical care (toileting, bathing, meal preparation, etc.)

Then the co-captain is going to be handling the medical/financial side of things (overseeing your parents finances are in order or hiring a professional to do so, helping to coordinate doctor appointments, and making sure that all



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medical prescriptions are correct). I have found that this way is the most efficient and least stressful method.

2. Decide future living arrangements.

The second thing that you need to decide is where your parents are going to live once they are no longer able to care for themselves independently.

Here are some important questions that need to be answered.

- a) Does your parent want to live in a nursing home?
- b) Does your parent want to spend their golden years in their own home?
- c) Does your parent want to live with you?

If your parent is going to a nursing home, you need to get as much information as possible about the facility beforehand. Don't just place your loved one somewhere because every other place was booked. You need to make sure that the environment is going to be a good match for your parent.

Set up a meeting with the director of the nursing home and ask them these questions before enrollment:

- a) How many patients does a CNA or a nurse care for at one time during their shift?
- b) What is the average answer/wait time for a patient call bell?
- c) What is the staffing turnover rate at your facility?

d) How many legal suits has the facility been charged with in the past three years?

e) What ingredients do the cooks at your facility use to make the patient's food?

f) What kind of financial assistance is offered at the facility?

All of these questions are imperative to know.

If your parent wants to stay in their own home, who is going to help take care of them?

a) Are you going to hire a home-care agency to assist your family member? If so, how much does that cost?

b) Does insurance cover it or do you pay out of pocket?

c) Will you pay for a highly trained concierge caregiver to take care of your loved one?

d) Are you going to quit your job and move in with your parent and care for them yourself?

If your parent is declining and the first two choices are not an option, will you move your parent into your home? Again, this question goes back to will you hire a homecare agency, do concierge care, or care for them yourself full time? All of these questions need to be answered in your family care plan.

I remember there was this one time when a patient was admitted to my facility, and I have never forgot this. Her family had one of the best long-term care plans I had ever seen. She called her daughter, who was captain, to inform her that she had fallen and was now at our rehab. The daughter came to our facility and helped to take care of her mom, both physically and emotionally. While she was there, the daughter then called her brother who was co-captain. He went over to his mom's house and got his mom's prepacked emergency hospital bag and brought it to the facility.

They had packed it months in advance. The mom had packed her favorite stretchy pants and shirts, comfortable sneakers, socks, sweaters, pajamas, underwear, toothbrush, and an up to date, printed-out piece of paper that had all of his mother's medications, her doctors, and a list of her family member's phone numbers on it.

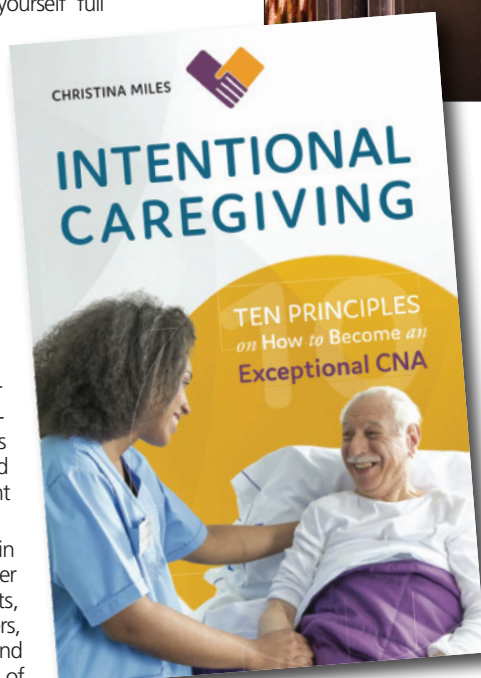
The brother then called each of their family members to inform them of what had happened. They all knew to call him to get updates and information because while he was doing that, his sister was speaking with the doctors, nurses, and was learning from the CNAs how to provide quality care to her mother.

The rest of the family waited patiently to hear from the brother as to how they could be of help. One brother went to the store and bought his mom her favorite dessert. Later on, the patient's sister came to the rehab to relieve her niece, who had been there for five hours and needed to get home. I was incredibly impressed by how efficient and effective their family care plan was.

Think of this like a fire drill. You need to practice the evacuation plan frequently and consistently. That way, when there really is a fire, you and your family members are going to have a greater chance of surviving it. Please plan. Preparation is key.

3. Get your finances in order.

The third and most important step is to get your finances in order. I have seen so many families struggle with this, which is why I'm so passionate about it. Money is queen. You work so hard for your income. Make sure that your money is working for you and not the other way around. Know where and what you're spending your finances on.



Christina Mile's book "Intentional Caregiving: Ten Principles on How to Become an Exceptional CNA" is available on Amazon.com

Here are some essential questions that need to be answered.

a) Do you have a 401k plan?

b) Do you have life insurance?

c) Do you have medical insurance?

d) Do you have a will in place?

e) How much debt are you in?

f) What is your credit score?

g) Are you investing? If so, in what? Roth IRA, stocks, real-estate, or cryptocurrency?

At this point you might be feeling overwhelmed because you have no idea what any of these terms mean. It's alright. Up until a few years ago I also didn't know what any of this meant.

But trust me, it's critical. So if you don't know now, it's okay. But you need to make it a priority to learn all of this, or you can pay a reputable financial professional to help you.

I know that talking about money is taboo, but increasing your financial knowledge is going to help you and your family thrive in life. Here is an example.

I once worked with a woman whose husband had recently passed away. Her husband had handled all of their finances for the entirety of their marriage. She didn't understand how any of the accounts worked, so she hired a financial advisor to help her sort through all of her husband's business dealings and assets. During that meeting she received some life altering news.

Her husband had squandered the majority of their life savings due to his gambling addiction, which she had no idea about. Her beautiful big house went into foreclosure. She had to sell off most of her possessions in order to raise just enough money to move across country, and in with her adult son. They both were struggling financially due to her son's student debt and she was a stay at home wife and mother.

At 74 years old she should have been living the best years of her life, but instead she had to get a job at Walmart, greeting people just to make ends meet. As she told me her story she wept. My heart hurt for her.

That is why I am such a big proponent of building generational wealth. It is never too late to start. You're going to have bigger advantages when you start younger, but it's never too

late to start investing. That way when you are ready to retire you live a comfortable lifestyle.

I know that it can be hard, but you can do it. Start talking openly about money with your family members, spouse, and your kids.

Money is a tool. You just have to learn the techniques on how to use that tool so that you can be financially successful. Money cannot make you happy, but it sure can make getting through the hard days easier.

Start today by looking at your bank account. Then make a list of all your monthly expenses, how much you are spending a month, and what are your money goals. Finally, create a road map of how you are going to achieve it. Make this process as fun as possible. You got this!

4. Live your life to the fullest.

The number one thing my patients tell me is to live my life to the fullest. So many people reach their golden years and look back on their lives with regret. "I wish I hadn't worked so much." "I wish I had spent more time with my family." "I wish I hadn't let my pride get in the way and apologized to my child." "I wish I had been a better parent." I have heard them all. That is why I tell my clients how important it is to live their lives and to have fun.

Make it a priority to do something once a month that you enjoy or have never done before.

I love traveling around the world, so every year on my birthday I visit another country. Traveling is food to my soul and spirit. Create a list of ten things that you love to do or that you want to do and start checking them off one by one today.

I cared for a man who lived on a sailboat with his family, and they sailed all over the world. The incredible stories that man would tell. I loved hearing about all the amazing adventures he and his family had experienced. Another client I cared for had an awesome tradition she did with her grandson who was seven. Once a month they would do fun activities together. One time they went hiking, the next time they went to a sports game, and another time they went on a family road trip. They had a blast. She cherished those moments dearly.

I cannot stress this enough. Prioritize having fun in your life! You only get one. Now go create some amazing memories :)

**For additional information,
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