



## **DO I NEED TO INTERVENE?**

The following warning signs may be evidence that you should explore with your parent(s) how they are doing and if assistance might be helpful or needed.

1. Is your parent unsteady while standing, or bruised from a fall? It is estimated that one-third of older adults living at home experience a fall each year. Those who fear falling often restrict their activities, which can lead to weakness, making them even more likely to fall.
2. Do they look thinner or are they eating poorly? Do they have trouble complying with a special diet? Many older adults experience poor nutrition and weight loss. Significant weight loss can be dangerous to overall health, and is often caused by health conditions, depression, dementia, medications, alcohol or limited finances.
3. Does your parent feel depressed? Changes in physical health and level of independence may lead to less social activity, anger and depression. Although as many as 25% of older adults may suffer from depression, many physicians fail to diagnose it because symptoms are often similar to other medical conditions.
4. Does your parent have trouble getting out of the house, or are they no longer driving? For many older adults, no longer driving can mean a loss of independence, making them feel isolated and less connected to the outside world.
5. Does your parent have difficulty remembering a major event? Difficulty with memory can be attributed to a number of things. Cognitive impairment, such as dementia, can result in confusion, wandering and aggression. It is important to have a physician evaluate the person's cognitive capabilities.
6. Does your parent have difficulty keeping track of medications? Older adults face serious health risks if they do not take medications appropriately. They may forget doses, take the same dose twice or take duplicate medications without realizing they are the same.
7. Is your parent's house disorganized, or are chores undone or bills unpaid? Everyday household maintenance can be overwhelming for some older adults with decreased strength and stamina. They may need help to manage everyday activities.
8. Are there potential hazards in your parent's home, such as extension cords or basement stairs? Hazards in the home include thick carpets, dim lighting, impaired vision and overmedication.
9. Is your parent having difficulty making it to appointments and running errands? Older adults sometimes have trouble getting to appointments, picking up prescriptions, groceries and more. This puts them at risk of not getting all of their everyday needs met.
10. Has someone close to your parents recently become ill or passed away? It is common for older adults to get along with the help of someone else (a spouse, neighbor, etc). When that person becomes unable to continue providing assistance, the older person's needs become more apparent to everyone involved.