

# Assessing Your Needs

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A number of options are available for finding help at home. It is often best to start by assessing both your needs as a caregiver and the needs of the person you are caring for. There are a variety of checklists to help you evaluate what types of help are needed. In general, consider the following areas:

- **Personal Care:** bathing, eating, dressing, toileting
- **Household Care:** cooking, cleaning, laundry, shopping
- **Health Care:** medication management, physician's appointments, physical therapy
- **Emotional Care:** companionship, meaningful activities, conversation

It is also important to evaluate the values and preferences of the person receiving care. He or she may be more comfortable with a home care worker who shares his or her cultural background and/or language. The care recipient may also have a preference between male and female caregivers, particularly if the worker will be helping with personal care.

## *Recognizing Your Values and Preferences*

When it comes to everyday care, what are your wishes? The first step in exploring your options is to be sure that you know what is most important to you. Those who are close to you also need to understand what you want. Projecting into the future is difficult, but it is important to educate yourself about choices and communicate how you feel about these.

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**Some of these questions may help you and your family think and talk about values and preferences:**

- How much are we willing to spend for paid care?
- Who in the family will take charge of care giving and/or make the arrangements for care?
- What kind of help do we need right now? What do we think we might want in the future?
- Can we get used to having a stranger in our home to help us? Can we adjust to someone who speaks a different language?

**Small and very personal choices also can make a big difference. For example:**

- How often do you want a bath? Is a shower all right? In the morning or at night?
- When it comes to showering, what would you like to have with (feet washed, back washed, or just drying & lotioning) ?bv
- Do you mind if someone of the opposite sex helps you with baths?
- What does your loved one like to wear at home? When they go out?
- Do you like to exercise? How often?
- Do you like to go outdoors? Or do you prefer being inside, near a window?
- Would you rather be alone most of the time or have company?