



Top 7 Decisions to be Considered when Selecting Home Health Care

You can find the right caregiver for your loved one.

Finding a qualified caregiver is not an easy task, however, working with an agency will ensure that no key components of care are overlooked. If you choose to conduct the search yourself, remember to take your time, do your due diligence, and make sure to take the steps that we have outlined on the next pages.

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1 Outline all of your specific needs and preferences ahead of time

After you've determined what kind of care your loved one needs, it's really important to get specific about each need as well as preferences. For example, while you may have listed that help is needed with household chores, you should detail the exact tasks. For example, is laundry, dusting, cooking, and shopping required or do they just need help with mopping the floors and cleaning the bathrooms? After you outline each task, it is also helpful to include other details such as how often and on what days you'll expect them to be done.

In the case of preferences, consider things like the gender of the caregiver, meal and bath times., personality types etc. All of these details should be decided upon and documented ahead of time to avoid confusion and aggravation later.

2 Consult more than one referral source

While a friend or family member may have a caregiver that is a perfect fit for them, he or she may not be the right person for your situation. Although it is important to get referrals, it is also important to understand that home health care is not a one-size-fits-all service. Each person is unique and thus has specific needs and preferences. It might be helpful to get several referrals including those from healthcare professionals such as your Doctor. After you have obtained referrals, you should still carefully consider your loved one's personality type, capabilities, and any challenges they may have before deciding on the right caregiver.

3 Always conduct a personal interview

Even when you have been given background information, a resume, and references, it is still critical to sit down and talk with the potential caregiver in person. Skipping this step can set you up for any number of bad experiences, not the least of which is choosing the wrong person.

Take the time to ask open-ended questions that require more than a yes or no answer. This will give you a feel for the caregiver's personality, how they would react in certain situations, and help you to determine whether there is a connection between the caregiver and you or your loved one.

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4 Always conduct a background check

If you choose to forego the agency or registry route, it's critical that you conduct a background check on anyone you're considering as a caregiver. When you work with an agency or registry, you are assured that this vital step is handled. However, if you are hiring the person directly, the obligation is on you. Although the caregiver may have references and say they are insured, it is imperative that you go through the formal process in order to verify that what they have told you is accurate.

5 Don't select a caregiver based on your personal preference alone

It makes sense that you want to choose a caregiver that you like. However, unless the caregiver is for you, it is important that your loved one has a strong connection with that person. Again, take your time. Arrange a conversation between your loved one and the potential caregiver to speak on their own, if possible, and make sure it's a good fit.

6 Don't rush into a decision

You're worried about your family member and it may be imperative that you get help quickly. However, the decision is one of the most important that you will make so take your time and follow all the steps necessary to make the right choice. Settling for a caregiver who may be 'just okay' could end up being a much bigger problem in the long run.

7 Be specific with expectations

Even though you've made a list of preferences and needs for you or your loved one's care, it's still important to create a plan that outlines specific tasks and clear expectations.

Just like any other position, the home health aide should have a detailed job description along with a comprehensive list of their duties. Consider making a schedule that lists what they are expected to do each day—you can even list timeframes for certain tasks.

For example, you may expect the caregiver to go grocery shopping only in the afternoon after they have prepared lunch or to do laundry only on certain days, etc. The more specific you are, the more likely you and your loved one will be happy and satisfied with the caregiver.