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Savvy Solutions for Seniors

Helpful tips for family caregivers

Curb your negative thinking



As humans, we are hard wired to pay more attention to what's not working or dangerous than what is going well. For instance, dwelling on a parent's growing weakness and instability rather than on his or her uncomplaining attitude.

This tendency to notice the negative can help us learn from mistakes and avoid preventable problems. But it's also easy to

get stuck spinning your wheels in negativity and become mired in depression and anxiety.

What are negative thoughts? There are several types of thinking that are more destructive than helpful.

- **All-or-nothing thinking.** It's all good or all bad. "If I don't get Dad to do all his exercises, the doctor will think I don't even try."
- **Catastrophizing.** "I just know she's going to break her hip."
- **Trash-talking yourself.** "I can never make Mom comfortable like my sister can."

How can you turn your negative thoughts around?

- **Don't try to stop them.** It's odd, but trying to suppress them actually gives them more power.
- **Recognize and accept you are in a funk.** Take a step outside yourself and notice that you are being negative: "Oh, I'm in my negative thinking mode again."
- **Ask yourself if your thoughts are helping.** Are you actually moving toward an action plan to change something?
- **Challenge the thoughts.** Put them to the "truth test." Are you truly incompetent? Have you *never* done something well? Strive for a balanced view of the situation.
- **Schedule time to recharge your own batteries.** Have lunch with a friend, take a walk around town, explore something that interests you locally.
- **What would you tell a friend?** We are often kinder to others than we are to ourselves. Any reason you don't deserve the advice you'd give a friend?

If your negativity is taking over, talk to a counselor. Such practical support helps us learn to loosen the grip of negative thinking.



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Senior care decisions
are stressful...
we provide unbiased
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About Us

Honora Care Management & Consulting helps older adults and their loved ones to navigate decisions related to aging. Learn more about us by calling 914-315-6057 or visiting our website www.honoracmc.com

Beware rogue pharmacies



We're all buying products via the Internet these days. Even medications. It's easy, and online merchants frequently offer bargain prices. Many of us are trying this route for relief from high drug costs. Unfortunately, a study by the National Association of Pharmacy Boards revealed that more than 60% of medicines purchased online are fake or substandard.

Buyer beware! If a drug costs less, it may be because the pill has less of the active ingredient. Or no active ingredient. Medical counterfeiters do not care about consumer health or safety. If your loved one is purchasing medicines online, he or she could actually be going without treatment! Or getting a fake drug with a different but related active ingredient. It may appear to help. But it was not the drug the doctor prescribed. And it could result in unanticipated side effects.

Serious consequences. Worse yet, counterfeit drugs may include harmful chemicals. These can be extremely dangerous. Some consumers have ended up in the emergency room needing treatment for ingesting chemicals they weren't aware they were taking!

How to spot a rogue pharmacy

Here are signs of a faker:

- The pharmacy is not based in the United States. (China and India are the worst offenders.)
- The price is significantly lower than standard cost in the United States.
- A prescription from a doctor is not needed. (Many rogue pharmacies will provide medicine on the basis of an Internet questionnaire.)
- They sell controlled substances (e.g., opioids).
- There is no published telephone number.
- There is no pharmacist to talk with.

Check before you buy

There *are* legitimate Internet pharmacies. The National Association of Pharmacy Boards has created the www.VIPPS.info website (Verified Internet Pharmacy Practice Sites). It lists only fully licensed U.S. pharmacies. There is a similar Canadian website at www.cipa.com.

Is your bathroom "senior-friendly"?

Falls due to environmental causes are the most preventable of all threats to older adults. And in that regard, the bathroom is one of the most dangerous rooms in the house.

Eighty percent of all falls occur in the bathroom. Slippery floors, hard surfaces, and unforgiving edges are just some of the hazards.

Getting up and down from the toilet and in and out of the shower are the top two activities most associated with falls.

Here's what you can do:

- **Install grab bars.** Use grab bars by the toilet and shower that bolt into the wall, at a stud. A tension pole (extending from floor to ceiling) is a reasonable alternative. Avoid counting on towel bars or suction-based grab bars. They are not reliable.
- **Purchase a shower chair or bench.** Use a shower chair in a walk-in shower to eliminate the need for standing. A shower bench bridges the side of a tub. It allows your loved one to sit on the bench at chair height, with feet outside the tub, and then pivot 90° to put feet in the tub and then scoot over for washing.
- **Get a hand-held showerhead.** With this device your relative can stay seated on the chair or bench throughout bathing. Make sure it can be easily hung from something in the shower while your relative is soaping up. An on/off button on the handle is also a nice feature.
- **Add nonskid rugs and mats.** Remedy slippery surfaces in the shower or tub with a nonskid mat or decals. In the bathroom, use only rubber-bottomed rugs. A towel on the floor to sop up water is a slip-and-fall waiting to happen.
- **Raise the height of the toilet.** In addition to a grab bar, install a taller toilet or add a raised seat. A 1.5"–3" boost can make getting up a lot easier!

