Dementia Preparedness Checklist

Following the disclosure of a dementia diagnosis, it is important to develop a plan. Although *every case is unique*, there are several common themes that can prepare the patient and family for the journey ahead. The following checklist provides important discussion points for both, the patient and caregiver to address:

- Learn as much as possible about the disorder. This can be done through the Internet, books, seminars or other such means
- Identify and contact support organizations associated with the diagnosed condition. These include Alzheimer’s Association (www.alz.org), Lewy Body Dementia Association (www.lbda.org), Alzheimer’s Foundation (www.alzfdn.org), Association for Frontotemporal degeneration (www.theAFTD.org) and others
- Learn about family caregiving from support organizations as well as the National Family Caregiving Alliance (www.caregiving.org)
- Both the patient and caregiver should participate in physically and cognitively stimulating activities such as exercise, dance, yoga, tai-chi, museum visits, brain games, and educational sessions
- Join clubs or social groups at the local community centers, senior clubs, religious congregations, or senior centers
- Eat a balanced, heart-healthy, diet with fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, lean protein (Chicken, fish, or beans). Seek out cooking assistance or consult a dietitian/nutritionist, if needed
- Seek supportive counseling to better cope with the condition, either through individual counseling, family counseling, or support groups
- Learn about:
  - A) Benefits and entitlement programs (Medicaid, Medicare, housing assistance etc.)
  - B) Transportation services (Local companies or governmental services)
  - C) Emergency alert systems/Safety devices (Personal response services, security and care products)
  - D) Meals delivery programs such as City-Meals-on-Wheels and God’s Love We Deliver
  - E) Home care services/companionship services (Home care agencies and cleaning companies)
  - F) Housing options:
    - Independent living/retirement communities/continuum care retirement communities
    - Assisted living facilities/dementia care units
    - Nursing homes
  - G) Respite services (Adult day care programs or short term institutional stays)
- Register in the MedicAlert + SAFE Return Program through the Alzheimer’s Association
- Plan and organize legal and financial matters (Using an elder law attorney, if necessary):
  - Designate a health care proxy
  - Complete a living will and a durable power of attorney
  - Apply for the appropriate Social Security Benefits
  - Oversight of bank accounts and finances

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