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**When Siblings Disagree About Caring for Aging Parents**

Most older adults with long-term care needs rely exclusively on family members to provide care and assistance. Often, that family member is the eldest daughter in the family, or, in the case of no immediate daughter or nearby daughter, the eldest and closest in proximity daughter-in-law. In fact, according to [Family Caregiver Alliance](https://www.caregiver.org/women-and-caregiving-facts-and-figures), the average caregiver is a 49 year old woman caring for her mother who does not live with her. Although sons do contribute to the caregiving load, on average, females spend approximately 50% more of their time providing care than males.   
  
There are many factors that can contribute to disagreements when it comes to making caregiving decisions in the best interest of mom or dad. Disagreements can arise when the sibling carrying most of the caregiver role feels as if his or her other siblings aren’t vested in the parents’ care. Other disagreement triggers include financial decisions, caregiver burnout, stress; even sibling rivalry can play a part, no matter the age of the siblings. So what do you do when you disagree on what’s best for mom or dad? Here are a few pointers that will hopefully lead you and your siblings to a resolution.

**Spend Time with Mom or Dad**

For siblings who live out-of-town, or who aren’t as involved in the caregiver role, plan a few days to spend one-on-one time with your parents. If possible, stay with your parents so that you can experience their care needs up close and personal. This will help open your eyes to the care needs your parents have, as well as serve to give the primary sibling caregiver a bit of a respite. You may also see a potential solution that the primary sibling caregiver hasn’t thought of that might alleviate some of the burden.

**Talk It Out**

Arrange a time for the immediate family to get together to have a conversation about mom or dad’s care needs. Allow the sibling who is juggling most of the caregiving load to share everything she does for mom or dad. When you’re not the one stopping to pick up groceries for your parents after work or missing a child’s event because mom or dad needs to get to the doctor, it’s difficult to realize how much time one sibling is actually devoting to the caregiver role. List all the care needs mom or dad have and potential care needs they may have down the road. Then, make a plan as a family to meet those needs.

**Compromise**

It’s not fair to let all the burden of caring for your aging parents to fall on one sibling. Even if all other siblings live out-of-town, they can still contribute to the caregiving. Compromise with one another by planning to give the primary sibling a respite from time to time. Perhaps an out-of-town sibling can arrange grocery delivery or laundry service from a distance, taking this load off the primary caregiving sibling. Remember that you are all in this together and need one another, especially as your parents long-term care needs progress.

**Seek Professional Help**

Finally, when an agreement can’t be reached, seek professional help to intervene. Whether it’s a social worker, counselor, or pastor, sometimes the best way to handle sibling conflict is with a professional. Professionals have the tools to walk you and your siblings through conflict resolution with an unbiased approach. Seek professional guidance from your parents’ doctors as well. They can provide caregiver resources for you and your siblings to review and discuss.

Fortunately, [Visiting Angels](http://www.visitingangels.com/denver/home) can help you and your siblings when it comes to the care needs of your aging parents. Our Angels are ready to assist, in whatever capacity that would best serve you and your family. Whether your aging parents need help running errands, assistance with bathing or dressing, or need a companion to keep mom or dad company so that you can attend to your own life, you can depend on us. Our team would be honored to work with you. Please [give us a call](http://www.visitingangels.com/denver) to set up a free consultation so that we can learn more about your situation.

Visiting Angels of Denver and Boulder, CO

303-232-9999

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