

Building Trust When Family is Far Away

Steve (age 75) and Mary (age 76) are in an independent living environment at an affluent lifecare community in Northern Virginia. Steve has been diagnosed with intermediate stage dementia. Mary is a no-nonsense, sophisticated investor, who has successfully managed the couple's multi-million dollar assets.

We were referred to this couple when Mary was in the process of determining what levels of healthcare support Steve needed relative to what she could afford. When we met her, Mary was evaluating whether to move toward higher levels of assistance within their community, or bring additional hours of home-based care into their independent living environment. Because her adult children live far away, Mary was trying to make these decisions on her own, with very little support. We were warned by her financial advisor that Mary was fee-conscious, and that her natural stoicism and skepticism about the field of wealth management might be a barrier to moving forward.

Turning Point

Rather than leading with a discussion of her financial affairs, our team sat down with Mary and began our conversation with a few simple questions,

"Tell us about you. Tell us about Steve. How did you get here?"

At this invitation, Mary opened up about her emotional journey as a caregiver. She freely shared her hope of choosing what was best for her husband as his health declined as well as addressed her fears, now that the home care approach was no longer working for Steve, of deciding between what she believed her options to be, considering his future needs. At the end of the meeting, we turned to financial topics and talked through next steps and the need to present this approach to her children. Getting their support and approval for moving ahead with a Lifecare Affordability Plan™ (LCAP), although not necessary, was important to her.

Our team followed up the initial conversation with a second phone meeting with the entire family and financial advisor that outlined our four-part strategy:

1. Submit a reimbursement claim for the long-term care insurance policy that Steve had invested in, to offset the current home care expense;
2. Gain clarity around the different plans of care associated with bringing in additional home care vs. transitioning to an adult day program in the community;
3. Translate how these two options will impact the family financially; and
4. Develop a financial plan that provides the family with the highest probability of paying for all of the options.

CLIENT PROFILE

Mary, age 76, is the primary caregiver for her husband Steve, who has Alzheimer's disease.

MOST HOPEFUL FOR

Spending as much time with Steve while he can still remember the two of them.

MOST FEARFUL OF

Not making good healthcare decisions and failing to do the best for Steve.

LCAP IMPACT

With informed knowledge of different paths of care available to her and a clear understanding of how to pay for them, LCAP empowered Mary to make healthcare decisions with a peace of mind and the support of her family.

One in a series of case studies that outlines the Lifecare Affordability Plan™ process. Case studies demonstrate how the convergence of an independent care assessment and financial plan can help make a positive impact on families.

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At the end of our brief conversation, the children were supportive of the LCAP approach and Mary signed on as a client. The children understood the value of this plan in the decision-making process, and Mary felt the increased peace of mind and support she needed to move forward with her plans.

What Did Mary's Financial Advisor Think?

Equally skeptical about LCAP, and apprehensive that her client wouldn't feel comfortable paying a fee, Mary's advisor was hesitant to make a referral. After talking with Team West, she decided to refer Mary, but would be with her client every step of the way. Mary's advisor was present and involved as Team West ventured into a detailed discussion about Steve and Mary's healthcare challenges—an area most advisors are not willing to tread. She was genuinely surprised that Mary was so willing to open up and freely express her emotions.

As a result of this experience, Mary's advisor now understands the benefit to having clients engage with Team West *before* healthcare issues arise. When Mary's husband started to decline at a faster pace than expected, the plan was already done and the support for both Mary and her husband was already in place. Mary's advisor now uses this case as a model for other clients in similar healthcare situations surrounded by uncertainty.

WHAT IS A LIFECARE AFFORDABILITY PLAN™?

A collaborative strategy that provides families with a care need driven action plan supported by a comprehensive financial review.

AN OVERVIEW

Key Inputs

- What are you most hopeful for?
- What are you most fearful of?

SEIA Team West

- Senior Housing and Healthcare Professional
- CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™

Typically 3 meetings, with conversations between meetings

Meeting 1: Discovery

Meeting 2: Review of care scenarios and financial analysis

Meeting 3: Final recommendations

OUR PROCESS

Interview clients, key family members and relevant care professionals

Review the family's understanding of the current care needs along with the most hopeful outcomes and the most troubling risks

Develop potential care scenarios based on coordinating input from healthcare, legal, and financial stakeholders

THE PLAN

Provides a road map to assist families in making decisions about how to pay for the desired living situation and care support both now and in the future

Includes actionable strategies around cash flow, investment, legal, and estate planning

Outlines realistic clinical and therapeutic paths and their affordability

SEIA

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