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What is COMPANION CARE?

BY SUSAN BUSSEY, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT SENIOR HOUSING | THE SUMMIT AT BRIGHTON

Few things are more reassuring than having a friend or companion to rely on for help, especially as we age. A caring companion can enrich the daily lives of our elderly loved ones—whether it's someone to carry the groceries, or check in when it's time to take medication.

Some people may benefit from companion services. The addition of companion care services can provide emotional support and friendship to someone who lives alone, in addition to assistance with minor daily activities. These companions help keep seniors mentally engaged and stimulated, which is essential to maintaining healthy brain function. Unlike medical care, companion care does not include hands-on treatment, but provides healthy seniors with help at home in a number of different ways:

- Meal preparation
- Light housework and tidying
- Medication reminders
- Playing games or reading
- Organizing and assisting with a schedule or datebook
- Transportation for shopping or errands
- Social outings to visit friends or a local cultural event
- Exercising, taking walks or going to the pool
- Assistance with pet care



Companion care is about encouraging older adults to stay healthy and motivated, maintaining their pride and independence while having a helping hand. Companions also play a vital role in a senior's health as the liaison between the individual and his or her family. Someone who spends hours each day with a senior may be more aware of changes in behavior that can indicate a health issue, and the companion can inform family members who otherwise might not have been aware of the issue.

It's important to choose a companion care service that thoroughly screens its employees, and that provides a uniquely matched companion the senior can rely upon. Living Well Companion Care, a service of Jewish Senior Life, serves seniors of all faiths and ethnicities who would like to stay at home and be independent. "Each senior is matched thoughtfully with a trusted, compatible companion," says Susan Bussey, Senior Vice President at Jewish Senior Life. "Our companions are carefully screened, because we only choose individuals who we would trust to care for our own loved ones. Our clients have told us that our companions are like family to them, and that means so much to us."

In combination with family members, senior companions can be incredibly helpful in keeping aging loved ones active and thoughtful as their lives change. For more information on Living Well Companion Care, please visit www.livingwellcompanioncare.org or call 585-248-5021.