

The Case Manager Corner



Putting in a Plan Before Having Surgery

By Linda Ziac
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www.TheCaregiverResourceCenter.com

Every day, The Caregiver Resource Center receives calls from individuals who feel overwhelmed by the challenges of life; whether it's dealing with parenting, a healthcare issue, an aging parent, or the struggles of living with a disability. Often times these individuals aren't sure what questions to ask, what rights they have, or where to turn for help.

The goal of The Case Manager's Corner is to provide a venue where Linda Ziac can share tips and skills that Linda has acquired over more than 40 years as a licensed psychotherapist, board certified case manager and board certified dementia practitioner; while helping readers become better educated consumers for themselves and their families.

Each month, Linda will present a case that she's worked on and the steps she's taken with clients and their families, to positively impact their lives and overcome challenges. Please note that this information is provided in a way that helps protect the client's privacy and confidentiality.

TODAY'S CASE PRESENTATION – BEN

“Tackling the challenges of surgery & rehab”

Linda received a call from Ben, a 42 year old man seeking Linda's assistance prior to knee surgery.

Ben said that a friend's parents used The Caregiver Resource Center's services, and spoke highly of Linda.

Ben shared that he was scheduled for knee surgery at the end of the month, and “I don't want a repeat of the chaos that followed my last knee replacement.”

THE SITUATION

Ben said that he has always been very athletic since childhood, and played varsity sports both in high school and college. According to Ben, *“As a result of all the wear and tear on my knees I was told that I needed both knees replaced. I had the first one done a year ago, and I've managed to put the 2nd one off as long as I could.”*

Being a very independent person, Ben said he was unprepared for the challenges he faced after his 1st knee surgery

Following the 1st surgery Ben said he went home with outpatient rehab. The end result was that Ben couldn't move around the house by himself, lived on delivery take out, and had to take a taxis to and from rehab. *"It was a 6 week nightmare!"*

A SUMMARY OF LINDA'S ASSESSMENT AND WORK WITH BEN

Ben and Linda met at Ben's home for an initial consultation, so that Linda would have a sense of the challenges that might be present in Ben's home.

We discussed a number of options, including some minor layout changes in Ben's home, as well as the idea of Ben hiring a private companion to help once Ben had the 2nd surgery. Ben and Linda outlined all the tasks that we thought a companion would be able to help Ben with including grocery shopping, meal prep, driving Ben to rehab appointments; to name a few. From this list we were able to develop a written job description and job duties, needed times, etc. for the temporary companion.

OUR PLAN

Ben and Linda selected a licensed homecare agency to work with us, who not only provided companions, but nurses as well. We wanted to have the availability of a nurse on call, in the event that Ben ran into any problems as the result of his surgery.

Linda arranged to go to the agency in order to interview and prescreen potential companion candidates. Linda came equipped with a list of interview questions that Linda created, which Linda used for each interview.

Based on the initial interviews, Linda was able to select 3 viable candidates, that Linda felt would be a good fit for Ben.

The next step was for Linda to provide Ben with copies of the interview responses for each candidate. After reading the candidate interview responses, and agreeing that these were all good candidates, Linda arranged for Ben and Linda to interview the 3 candidates together.

Ben said that he felt comfortable with all three candidates, but selected Tim; based on Tim's interest in sports, Tim's own experience with knee surgery, and the fact that Ben felt Tim had the personality and physical strength to help Ben endure his rehab.

Prior to the surgery, Linda arranged for Tim to come to Ben's home for an orientation. We discussed Tim's job duties, work schedule, Tim's likes and dislikes, and Ben's concerns about his previous experience with surgery.

BEN'S SURGERY AND RECOVERY

Linda is pleased to report that in Ben's words, *"My surgery and recovery went better than I could ever have hoped for."*

Tim drove Ben to his surgery and upon returning home, Tim remained with Ben for 6 weeks, throughout his recover. Tim was there every step of the way with Ben, not only fixing meals and driving Ben to rehab, but also serving as Ben's "coach "- encouraging Ben every step of the way during his recovery.

A PROGRESS REPORT ON BEN

Linda received periodic emails from Ben. The last email said that Ben was on his way to a business trip in CA. Ben said he planned to stop by to visit his parents while in CA, and hopefully play a few rounds of golf. Ben thanked Linda for her help, and said if only he had put this plan in place for his 1st knee surgery.

“Pre-planning can help save you time, money and frustration.”

CASE MANAGEMENT

Case management is a collaborative process that consists of four steps:

1. Needs Assessments
2. Development of a customized Care Plan (road map)
3. Implementation & Monitoring of the Plan
4. Ongoing Review and Modification of Care Plans as client needs change

THE CAREGIVER RESOURCE CENTER

Each person is unique, and as a result each person has unique needs. Some people may experience mental and physical limitations that limit their level of functioning, while others will remain relatively high functioning.

The Caregiver Resource Center's role is to work with the client, their family and healthcare professionals to help assess, plan for and implement ways to allow for their greatest degree of health, safety, independence, and quality of life.

Some Benefits of Our Services

- Well respected company serving the community since 1990
- We work with seniors and people with special needs addressing both health and mental health issues.
- All services are individually designed to meet the unique needs of the client
- We are available 7 days a week by appointment, and 24/7 for emergencies
- Professional support & guidance
- Our services may be provided on-site in the home, doctor's office, ER, hospital, assisted living facility, or nursing home

Photo from Microsoft

The information in this article is provided as an information resource only, and is not to be used or relied on for any diagnostic or treatment purposes. This information is not intended to be patient education, does not create any patient provider relationship, and should not be used as a substitute for professional diagnosis and treatment.

Please consult your health care provider for an appointment, before making any healthcare decisions or for guidance about a specific medical condition.

Linda Ziac is the owner and founder of The Caregiver Resource Center. The Caregiver Resource Center is a division of Employee Assistance Professionals, Inc. which Linda founded in October 1990. The Caregiver Resource Center provides a spectrum of concierge case management and advocacy services for seniors, people with special needs and families.

Linda's professional career spans more than 48 years in the health and mental health field as a CT Licensed Professional Counselor, CT Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor, Board Certified Employee Assistance Professional, Board Certified Case Manager, and Board Certified Dementia Practitioner. In addition, Ms. Ziac has 15 years of experience coordinating care for her own parents.

Linda assists seniors, people with special needs and their families; in planning for and implementing ways to allow for the greatest degree of health, safety, independence, and quality of life. Linda meets with individuals and family members to assess their needs, and develop a Care Team, while working with members of the Team to formulate a comprehensive Care Plan (a road map).

Once a plan is in place, Linda is available to serve as the point person to monitor and coordinate services, and revise the plan as needed. This role is similar to the conductor of an orchestra; ensuring that there is good communication, teamwork, and that everyone remains focused on the desired goal.

For more information, please contact:

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