

When A Mediator is Necessary

- 1. Siblings do not come to an agreement regarding care for their parent/s.***
- 2. Family members are not willing to compromise.***
- 3. No solutions are being reached in regards to the care of the parent/s or grandparent.***
- 4. Family members can't agree on what is "best" for the elder.***
- 5. Arguments over expenses, wills, parents estate, and end of life decisions.***

Having to cope with the fact that a parent is no longer capable of taking care of themselves is very stressful for most people, which often increases tensions and emotions within the family. Of course, this leads to unnecessary arguments. Disagreements pose a threat to the family's well-being and could potentially jeopardize the level of care available to the elder.

When you bring a mediator on board, then you can ensure that you are increasing your chances of keeping the family together through a trying time. Strain and tension in the family add stress for caregivers and elderly family members alike. Mediation can help alleviate the tension and help the family find the best solution for everyone involved.

The mediator's job is to ask questions that are meant to help siblings regain focus in regards to the care they are seeking for a loved one. If the mediator has succeeded in their practice, then family members will leave with everyone seeing eye to eye. However, if a mediator cannot resolve family disputes regarding care, the siblings may find themselves in court battling their viewpoints of what is better for their parent/s.

Factors That May Present Conflict

- 1. Where the elder will reside***
- 2. What each sibling is responsible for in regards to care***
- 3. Concerns regarding safety and health of their loved one***
- 4. Selling the family home***
- 5. Disagreement regarding the will or parent's estate***

Frequently, disputes can stall the care that is needed for their parent/s. Inadvertently the elder is affected in a negative way, and ultimately they are denied the care they need regarding their transition in life. Instead of having long-term vendettas within the family, it is always best to bring in an outside party with an unbiased opinion who will evaluate the facts of the situation versus reacting on emotion and personal belief.

The mediator will not tell the family members what to choose, but they will assist in presenting facts that are clear for all family members to come to an agreement regarding what is best for the involved parties. In essence, the mediator serves to help the family members reach an agreement while maintaining control of their choices. If the case has to be taken to court, then all siblings are left without control.

When mediation fails or is not attempted, familial disputes can reach a point where the state has to take control away from the family and instead decide on the care of an elder family member based on statutes and codes. It is often hard to compromise, especially when discussing challenging situations that spawn a lot of emotions. If you cannot reach an agreement, then it is best to find a suitable mediator regarding your case.

If you find that you need an elder mediator, make sure you find a person experienced in elder law and is willing to listen to all parties. Understand that the elder is typically considered the client, and the mediator is present to ensure that their client's needs are met. The mediator's goal is to bring forth awareness regarding issues family members may not have initially considered, such as available resources, eldercare issues, and other aspects the family may not have initially been familiar with.

Remember that the purpose of a mediator is to help the family understand what is necessary regarding the care of their elderly parent. Listen to the advice or guidance they offer, and work together to create a solution regarding your elderly loved one. If you can accomplish a compromise, you are ensuring that your parent/s or grandparents will get the care they need in a timely manner.

It is essential to make sure you are working with a qualified mediator who is familiar with the state laws regarding senior care. Do not choose a mediator based upon cost, but rather, choose an individual who has a proven track record in resolving disputes. Who you choose can ultimately decide if your family can come to an agreement that everyone is happy with instead of fighting a lengthy and costly battle in court.

Do not chance losing family ties because your parent/s or grandparents are in need of assistance. Instead, reach out to someone qualified and willing to help all parties come to an agreement that is beneficial regarding your elderly loved one.