

Signs a Loved One's Care Needs May Be Changing

A CAREGIVER GUIDE TO
RECOGNIZE, REFLECT, AND
RESPOND WITH CONFIDENCE.



NAVIGATING
SENIOR CARE *with Leah*

COMPASSIONATE GUIDANCE.
CONFIDENT DECISIONS.

PRACTICAL TOOLS. REAL SUPPORT. FROM SOMEONE WHO GETS IT.

NSCWLEAH@GMAIL.COM

Changes don't always happen all at once.

Sometimes the little things add up. This guide will help you notice what matters and take thoughtful next steps.



Daily Living Changes

- They seem more tired or withdrawn than usual.
- Personal hygiene or appearance has changed.
- The home is messier or bills are piling up.
- They seem confused about dates, appointments, or routines.



Medication & Nutrition

- Medications are missed, doubled up, or not refilled on time.
- Appetite has changed or meals are being skipped.
- Weight has changed without trying.
- There are expired or unused medications around the home.



Caregiver Strain

- You feel overwhelmed, exhausted, or on edge.
- It is getting harder to manage everything on your own.
- You feel stuck, guilty, or unsure what to do next.

*Take a Pause
& Check In*

- ☐ I've noticed one or more changes.
- ☐ I trust my instincts.
- ☐ It may be time for a conversation.
- ☐ I do not have to figure this out alone.

Noticing the signs is the first step toward getting the right support in place.



Subtle signs to watch for

Changes often happen gradually.
You know your loved one best. Look for patterns, not perfection.



Routine & Memory

- Forgetting appointments, conversations, or recent events more often.
- Struggling with familiar tasks or following steps.
- Repeating questions or becoming more disorganized.



Personal Care

- Bathing, grooming, or changing clothes less often.
- Laundry, dishes, or housekeeping are not being kept up.
- Clothing may seem inappropriate for the weather or occasion.



Mood & Behavior

- Increased irritability, worry, confusion, or suspiciousness.
- More apathy, flat mood, or less interest in usual routines.
- Noticeable changes in judgment or decision-making.



Social Changes

- Pulling back from friends, church, hobbies, or activities.
- Avoiding phone calls or social events.
- Seeming lonely but not reaching out.

One sign
alone may
not mean
much.

Several small
changes
together can
tell a bigger
story.



Safety, health, and the home

Care needs often show up in safety concerns, health changes, and the ability to manage the home well.



1. Falls & Mobility

- Recent falls or near falls.
- More unsteadiness, weakness, or fear of walking.
- Trouble getting in and out of bed, chairs, or the shower.



2. Home Environment

- Clutter, spoiled food, unopened mail, or unpaid bills.
- Missed home maintenance or new hazards around the home.
- Difficulty managing the stove, appliances, or driving safely.



3. Food & Hydration

- Empty fridge, skipped meals, or little interest in food.
- Signs of dehydration such as dry mouth, fatigue, or dizziness.
- Trouble shopping, cooking, or eating regularly.



4. Medications

- Confusion about what to take and when.
- Missed doses or extra doses.
- Prescriptions not refilled on time.

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Questions to ask this week

☐

Are they safe where they are living?

☐

Are their basic needs being met consistently?

☐

Would more help reduce stress or risk?

☐

What support would make daily life easier?

*You don't have
to have it all figured out.*

YOU JUST HAVE TO KEEP SHOWING UP.

—
GUIDANCE
SUPPORT
CLARITY
—



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When more support may be needed

Care needs exist on a spectrum. Support can grow over time, and that is okay.



*More support
is not failure.
It is a response
to real needs.*

Questions to ask

- What feels manageable right now?
- What no longer feels safe or realistic?
- Who can help consistently?
- What would bring the most relief?



What support can look like

Support does not have to mean just one thing.
It can be layered, flexible, and built around real life.



1 Family & Friends

Shared visits, check-ins, meals, transportation, or rotating help.



2 In-Home Help

Personal care, companionship, meal prep, light housekeeping, or medication support.



3 Adult Day Services

Structured daytime support, social connection, supervision, and caregiver respite.



4 Assisted Living

A supportive setting for those who need help with daily living but not constant skilled nursing care.



5 Memory Care

A secure setting with staff and routines designed for people living with dementia.



6 Skilled Nursing or Higher Medical Support

More intensive support for complex medical, rehab, or around-the-clock care needs.

Start with one conversation



- What is getting harder?



- What matters most to them?



- What would feel supportive, not overwhelming?



- What is the next smallest step?

Urgent signs that should not be ignored

Some changes need prompt medical attention or urgent help.
When in doubt, trust your instincts and reach out.



Call the doctor promptly if you notice:

- Sudden increase in confusion or unusual sleepiness.
- Repeated falls or a rapid decline in mobility.
- Not eating or drinking enough.
- New incontinence, severe weakness, or a major change in behavior.
- Possible medication mix-ups or side effects.



Seek urgent or emergency help right away for:

- Chest pain, trouble breathing, or signs of stroke.
- A fall with possible injury or inability to get up.
- Severe dehydration, unresponsiveness, or high fever.
- Wandering that places the person in immediate danger.



This guide is educational and not a diagnosis.
If something feels sudden, severe, or unsafe, get medical guidance right away.