

# Professional Caregiving and Our Own Families

## The Prophet Without Honor

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Education (CARE)



**Collaboratory  
for Aging  
Resources and  
Education**

# USING POLL EVERYWHERE

- Participate and hear from each other
- Two ways to join
  - TEXT tmermelstein305 to 22333
  - Go to [pollev.com/tmermelstein305](http://pollev.com/tmermelstein305)





# THE OBLIGATORY

## Today's Goals

- Demonstrate the challenges of caring for aging loved ones (with some help from the audience)
- Propose remedial actions to be taken in caring for our own loved ones and review ethical codes from a variety of fields for guidance in how to handle blending lines between family members and clients

# THE OBLIGATORY

## Today's Goals

- Invite attendees to consider:
  - Their own biases in addressing the ways we care for families
  - How to address conflicting findings in blended personal and professional situations
- Create a safe space where we can support one another

Neither presenter has any conflicts to disclose.



# A CONFESSION

- Tammy's story
- Peggy's story

# **WE MAY WEAR MANY HATS**

- Subject matter expert
- Referral source
- Care manager/coordinator
- Problem solver
- Errand person
- Physical caregiver
- Punching bag



## CAREGIVING BACKGROUND

- 1 in 5 adults provide care for another adult with health needs and/or functional challenges (locally 1 in 4)
- 90% of care is performed by family caregivers
- 61% female; 39% male
- 61% also work outside the home, with the average caregiver working full-time

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# Have you provided care to a loved one with health or other challenges?

Yes

No, but I expect you in  
the next couple years

No, and I do not expect to  
in the next couple years

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**What are some of the experiences you have had or challenges you have faced caring for a loved one?**

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**If you provide care, do or did you feel that the care recipient respected your expertise?**

Yes

No

Sometimes/depends  
on the situation

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**If you provide care, do or did you feel that other family members respected your expertise?**

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**What are some of the experiences you have had or challenges you have faced caring for a loved one?**



# PEER EXPERIENCES

- I felt like a failure/hypocrite...
- If it is this hard for me, what is it easily like for others?
- Knowing too much versus too little – frustration either way
- Why can't <insert name here> just listen?
- You don't know what you are talking about/you're the expert, why can't you do the impossible?

# **SURVEYING THE FIELD**

Understanding Our Ethical Obligations  
through Others' Framework



## IN OTHER PROFESSIONS

- Physicians/medical personnel: should not treat oneself or members of immediate family (AMA)
- Attorneys: can represent family so long as there is no conflict of interest (ABA)
  - Attorney should not represent a client if that attorney's interests could conflict but the client can choose to ignore concerns
  - An attorney who represents himself has a fool for a client

# IN HELPING PROFESSIONS

- Social workers (NASW) and counselors (ACA)
  - Observe issues of power differential
  - Refer when objectivity is challenged
  - Code of Ethics specifically recognizes dual or multiple relationship roles
    - Social workers should not engage in dual or multiple relationships...[when] there is risk of exploitation or potential harm...
    - BUT if/when it happens, protect your client with clear boundaries
    - Client interests are primary



## IN HELPING PROFESSIONS

- Social workers (NASW) and counselors (ACA)
  - ACA used to prohibit treating family but has changed to permit it if the counselor can remain objective
  - Some organizations enforce stricter standards
    - Ex. Kaiser Permanente holds counselors to physician standards with regard to this issue



**What are some of the core differences or distinctions between these code of ethics approaches?**

# SOME CORE DIFFERENCES

- Similarities
  - Role of objectivity and effects of clouded judgement
- Differences
  - Attention paid to potential issues related to family
    - More absolute vs. more relative
  - Unspoken expectations
  - Power dynamic and role of consent

# **What do you do when either you and the care recipient or you and other family members disagree on the best course of action?**

**Top**



## WHAT WE HAVE DONE

- Encouraged research
- Remembered that “Being Old Doesn’t Mean You Lose the Right to Make Bad Decisions”
- Analyzed own biases
- Embraced self-determination when possible

# WHAT WE HAVE DONE

- Tried to establish boundaries
- Recognized our own (and systemic) limitations
- Redirected frustrations into making change



# **WE ARE IN A UNIQUE POSITION**

Professional or self-expectation to help

Vs.

Unique challenges from knowledge and training



## **TAKE A STEP BACK**

- Remember why you went into this field
- Treat your loved one as a client (self-determination)
- Choose the role(s) that work best for you and for your family
- Set reasonable expectations for yourself and your loved ones&



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