

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

# WHAT TO LOOK FOR

## UNDERSTANDING THE SIGNS

You may not know exactly what your mom or dad is going through, but as we age, our struggle to maintain independence is a lot like our desire to achieve it when we're young. And similarly, it's not an all-or-nothing situation. Your parent may just need support in one area, like eating healthy or keeping up with the yard. But how will you know what that is and when to get involved? If you know what to look for, simple observations will be your guide.

# 10 SIGNS TO WATCH FOR



- Keep an eye on the fridge and pantry. If food shopping is a new responsibility after the death of a spouse or it's recently become a difficult task, your parent may not be keeping enough, or just the right kind of food at home.
- An unexplained weight change or a preponderance of convenience foods might mean that cooking and meal preparation are a challenge.
- Confusion over medications or medical treatments could mean that your parent needs assistance at doctor appointments or help organizing or taking prescriptions.
- Notice if unopened mail begins to pile up or your parent starts to get calls from collectors, which could mean he or she is having trouble managing their finances.
- An unusual donation or unexpected change in estate planning could indicate a scam or fraud, in which case you may want to contact an attorney who is experienced with elderlaw issues.
- Behavior and other health changes could be a sign that your parent isn't taking their medications as prescribed.
- Take a casual look around their home for maintenance issues that could become safety hazards, like dead batteries in smoke alarms, loose rugs, burned out lightbulbs, cracked or broken glass.
- Pay attention to how clean the space is. Has the state of their home changed? If trash, dishes or clothes start to accumulate, your parent might benefit from occasional housekeeping support.
- Ask about their social circle. If visits and other get-togethers are less frequent, you may want to help them find other ways to connect with people.
- Get a sense for your parent's state of mind. If worries and concerns, sadness or fear are prevalent, they may need extra emotional support by having a friend or loved one they can talk to.