



Elder Care

Meet the People We Help...

Problem

When her husband of 55 years was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, 87-year-old Evelyn became deeply depressed—a situation made worse by a bad argument with her daughter about his care. Evelyn called the AgeWell Pittsburgh information and referral line at JF&CS to find out where to get the help she needed for her husband and to cope with her own emotional troubles.

Solution

The knowledgeable specialists at JF&CS arranged for an experienced caregiver to come to Evelyn's home to help with her husband twice a week. Since she could not leave him alone for long periods—and also suffered from her own mobility problems—they connected her to an in-home counselor. After an initial evaluation, the licensed clinical social worker continued to make regular home visits to help Evelyn better deal with the challenges of her husband's growing mental and physical infirmity and her clashes with her daughter about his care. JF&CS also connected the couple to an ElderAlert Personal Emergency Response System for use during emergencies.

Outcome

Evelyn is learning to better meet her husband's changing needs, making sure he does his exercises and takes his medications. She is beginning to cope more effectively with her own anxiety and stress during this difficult period and learning how to take on more household responsibilities. Occasionally, her husband will stand at the door and listen to her counseling sessions. "I think soon we might go from individual counseling to couple's counseling, and it would be really beneficial for their relationship and their health," according to JF&CS staff.