



Elder Care

Meet the People We Help...

Problem

After a major fall, Jack's orthopedic surgeon told him he must undergo back surgery. The 84-year-old widower had been doing well in an assisted living facility for the past several years, where he had many friends and enjoyed a rich life. Following his operation, though, he spent three months in a nursing home for physical rehabilitation away from everything that was comfortable and familiar to him. There, he developed mild depression and began to suffer cognitive setbacks. But doctors there determined he was at high risk for future falls and advised that he remain in the nursing home where he could receive round-the-clock care. Based on the physician's recommendation, his former assisted living facility refused to allow Jack to return.

Solution

An experienced geriatric social worker from the JF&CS Comprehensive Care Coordination program made regular visits to Jack in the nursing home and spoke with his health care providers and caregivers there. She had begun to work with him while he was still in the assisted living facility before his medical crisis and knew his situation well. "I knew he would not fare well emotionally by staying in the nursing home," the care coordinator says. "He might live out his years with more quantity there, but his perceived quality of life would be very poor—and his dignity would suffer." The care coordinator began to search out other residential options for Jack.

Outcome

Thanks to JF&CS, Jack is now in his own apartment in a different assisted living facility and back to feeling like himself. He is recovering well from his surgery and rebuilding his life in his new home, where he receives regular care to help ensure his safety. Most importantly, he is very hopeful about his future again. "No one was looking at the full picture of who Jack was beyond his medical diagnoses," his care coordinator says. "Sometimes we need to take a step back and advocate for what our clients really need, to err on the side of self-determination."