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[www. quakeragingresources.org](http://www.quakeragingresources.org)

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTED RESOURCES:

Edited by Patricia McBee, Grounded in God: Care and Nurture in Friends Meetings, 2002, Quaker Press of Friends General Conference, Philadelphia.

Cappy Capossela and Sheila Warnock, Share the Care-How to Organize a Group to Care for Someone Who is seriously Ill, 2004, Fireside, New York, NY.

James E. Miller with Susan C. Cutshall, The Art of Being a Healing Presence- A Guide for Those in Caring Relationships, 2001, Willowgreen Publishing, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Marge Heegaard, to be illustrated by children, When Someone Has a Very Serious Illness- Children Can Learn to Cope With Loss and Change, 1991 Woodlands Press, Minneapolis, MN.

Rosalynn Carter, Helping Someone with Mental Illness, 1999, Three Rivers Press, New York, NY

Harold G. Koenig and Andrew J. Weaver, Pastoral Care of Older Adults, 1998, Augsburg Fortress Publishers, Minneapolis, MN

That All May Worship, An Interfaith Welcome to People With Disabilities, 2005, The National Organization on Disabilities, Washington, D.C

QUAKER AGING RESOURCES

*Role of the Meeting in
Care for Aging Friends
and Others*



*Q: When we become aware of
someone's need, do we offer
assistance?*

PYM Faith and Practice, 2002



Aging Resources Consultation Help



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Quaker Aging Resources is a collaborative project of New York and Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Quakers and is funded by the Thomas Scattergood Foundation and Friends Foundation for the Aging.

Role of the Meeting in Care of Aging Friends and Others

Often Meetings are shy about contacting Friends and attenders who might be in need of some sort of support. Meeting members say, “I don’t want to intrude”, or, “They’ll call us if they need something”, or, “We don’t do that.” But if not us, then who?

As Friends we are, all of us, the clergy, the preacher, the minister, the pastor, for our Meetings. As pastors, we have a responsibility to reach out to seniors, singles, and the no longer able, to ascertain what role Meeting needs to take in their support. Those who need our help most, may be the least able to ask for it. If the person rejects our help, at least we have tried.

Historically, this sensitivity to the needs of persons and families in a Meeting resided with the Women’s Business Meeting who would identify the need, propose what was to be done and by whom, and they would then turn to the Men’s Business Meeting to provide the funds, or the milk cow, or the farm help. When the Business Meetings were combined, responsibility to be aware of where care was needed was no longer as clearly defined, and Meeting’s role in alleviating that need may have changed. When Friends lived in communities with many other Quakers, no one’s need was overlooked. However, these days, it is easier to lose track of our Friends from one Sunday to the next.

Q: Do all adults and children in our community receive our care and encouragement to share in the life of the Meeting, and to live as Friends?

With fewer families living close by and more families needing to live on two full time incomes, with more people not having children, with aging singles, Meetings have important work to do. We may find ourselves increasingly filling in the blanks, connecting seniors with assistance, and alerting families of changes in behavior or mental status. In Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Friends can turn to the Care and Aging Office. Aging Resources, Consultation and Help, ARCH, is available to Friends in New York Yearly Meeting.

Q: Am I ready to offer assistance as part of my religious community serving its members? Am I equally willing to graciously accept the help of others?

One Meeting cared for an older Friend’s cat during a hospital stay; another drove a Friend to medical appointments; a third contacted the distant son when his stepmother needed nursing home placement and his father was no longer able to get financial papers in order. PYM has sent a social worker to help a hoarder slowly part with clutter, or to deal with depression; ARCH has worked with Meetings and families to identify assistive strategies, or to explain how nursing home costs can be covered.

Often the most significant services a Meeting can provide are a visit, a phone call, an invitation to a meal. Both Care and Aging and ARCH can help Meetings establish Care Teams which identify the needs to be met, then recruit Friends, neighbors, and family to share in meeting those needs. Care Teams result in less work for a few people as the work is shared by more team members, and no one gets burned out, everyone does only what they have the time and inclination to do.

One Meeting realized that they were not as aware of Friends’ needs and they called everyone on the Meeting list and asked if there was something they needed from Meeting. That resulted in learning of interpersonal issues they hadn’t picked up on, more requests for clearness meetings, and a new awareness of where care was called for. This pastoral care can lead to a new closeness within the Meeting, add depth to worship, and enable Friends to live out the Testimonies of Community and Equality, equality in the sense that those who can attend Worship and those who are shut ins receive equal care and notice from the worshipping community. Meetings who step into their role of pastoral care will receive gifts of grace they can not anticipate.

“And I desire that you may be very kind and courteous to all in necessity, in the love of God...” George Fox, 1682

