



Challenges After a Fall from the...

Northern Virginia Fall Prevention Coalition

by Bradley Morgan & Stephan Marais

As many of our professional service providers will tell you, physical aftermath, financial costs for additional care, fear of new mobility restrictions or a change of housing residences can all challenge us or our loved ones after a fall. From our work with those over 72 in assisted living and skilled nursing communities, we have experienced a wide range of responses from withdrawal from outside activities to a renewed sense of resilience.

What are some of the factors that influence whether resignation sets in or the person attains a complete recovery? Review these factors and see if they resonate with your loved one's retrieving their independence.

- First, the impact of a fall will determine how rapidly the healing process will begin. Respondents have reported that lasting bruising was very common, often widespread over a hip or shoulder where the impact took place. Also, treatment routines will differ per physician's recommendations, even if a major fracture has been avoided. It will be important that you as caregiver will want to be certain of the time required and counsel patience when necessary.
- Next, be cognizant of mood and culture for your loved one. Remember that mood is not depression. Mood is the basic internal state of each of us in how we approach the world and show up after adversary happens to us. Also, culture can play a critical role in how we as a society respond to oppositions. Cultures vary in how they set expectations of how 'long' you should be recuperating or recovering. Discuss this issue as a concerned advocate with your nearest and dearest. Arrange regular check in periods for your discussions, noting where other family members or professionals can add their compassion.
- If your loved one has to spend some time in a recovery facility, try to make it as positive and homelike as possible. Contingent on space, bring favorite books, photographs, valued awards, even a 'walk-man' with headphones for the music that would be uplifting and aid to the healing process. Give special attention to the location of night lights in the unfamiliar facility, reducing the possibility of another fall. Review the areas in the shower or bathtub where grab bars will be critical for them now.
- Last, discuss the plans for the return home. Determine if at home care will be needed. There are many faith based organizations that will volunteer companion time or trips for needed supplies. Arrange for family members and other close friends to know when it is safe and convenient to visit or call.

Our mission, the Northern VA Fall Prevention Coalition (NVFPC), is to work with the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention and Virginia organizations, and individuals, concerned with fall prevention and education. Our primary focus is to improve on the existing resources of public practitioners in the state, addressing the need for additional services. We conduct a series of informative seminars fulfilled by professional pharmacists, optometrists, caregivers, and other specialists serving the local community. By educating our state's aging populace brings not only positive social change; but, also a shift in daily routines for the quality of life.

Falls are not an inevitable part of aging. Falls are preventable!

We look forward to you joining us at our next seminar. For upcoming events, please visit our Web page, nvfpc.org. Or call Becky Schaffer at 703-475-3044.