Know your community eldercare team

Who’s who?

@Tsao Foundation
Singapore has a slew of services to help older people age well in place at home and in the community. There are different eldercare services, centres and home care teams, run by private, government-link organisations, as well as non-profit organisations.

**Services delivered to homes**

- Meals on Wheels
- Medical Escort and Transport
- Home Medical
- Home Nursing
- Home Therapy
- Home Personal Care
- Hospice Home Care
- Befriending Service

**Care at Centre**

- Day Care
- Senior Activity Centre
- Community Rehabilitation Centre
- Centre-based Nursing
Within the different centres and care teams, you have a number of clinical and care personnel whom you can work with to better care for your elders.

TIP:- If you need help, ask for it. You can visit AIC website [https://www.aic.sg/care-services/e-care-locator](https://www.aic.sg/care-services/e-care-locator) for relevant agencies or call them at 1800-650-6060 to understand more.

Alternatively you can ask your hospital doctor to refer you to a social worker who can help to recommend a relevant service provider and link you up to them as well.
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At Tsao Foundation, some of our teams at ComSA and HMCSA work as a one-stop, first-stop primary healthcare provider.

The teams practice person-centred, holistic healthcare with the aim to enable individuals to optimise their health and well-being across the life course, and to age at home and in the community.

They also have additional access to inter-departmental experts to help care for the elder and their caregiver well – while staying connected to the external care services available from our community partners.

Our two EPICCs also help frail elders with IHDC packages so we work with clients and their caregivers on their needs and gather all relevant services together for them.

ComSA = Community for Successful Ageing
HMCSA = Hua Mei Centre for Successful Ageing
EPICC = Elder-Centred Programme of Integrated Comprehensive Care
IHDC = Integrated Home and Day Care
So in an earlier contribution by counsellor Lina Koh, it was mentioned that to be an empowered caregiver, one must have/continually must gain knowledge.

Let’s get to know your community care teams and professionals better so that you can understand how to work with each and every one of them effectively to better create the care that suits you and your elder.
Some medical doctors will visit the elders’ homes or eldercare service centres to provide vital medical services to the patients and clients.

Their services include conducting minor medical procedures, comprehensive care assessments and providing long-term management of chronic conditions etc.
Some questions you can ask your home- or community-based doctor

Doctor, can you help me to better understand my mum’s conditions and how I can manage her recuperation at home? We couldn’t understand what the surgeon said previously…

Doctor, there are too many different pills for my father. I’ve explained and indicated all but both my helper and father continued to be confused by the pills. Can you help us to manage it somehow?

Doctor, my mum developed these symptoms, should I be concerned? Are you able to refer us to the right specialist?
Sometimes, they can do more than you think…

I can advise /schedule you for your annual health checks, flu vaccines etc. In times of need, some of us can give you medical advice too via a 24/7 helpline.

I can help you on your Lasting Power of Attorney and Advance Medical Directives too!

At times, thanks to our community partners and network, we are able to help to speed up vital referrals and medical appointments too.
Community nurses

Attend to your clinical needs

Community nurses provide nursing care such as wound dressing, injections, stoma care and insertion of nasogastric tubes at the clients’ homes or centre-based services.
These nurses also play a key role in managing and reviewing the care plan of the patient, in consultation with doctors, as well as providing caregiver training to the family, caregiver and domestic helper.
Hi, I bought a new milk formula for my dad. Can you help me to check if the contents is suitable for him?

Can you help me to see if my mum’s dressing is ok? She has been itching to remove it…

My grandpa has been constipated for days. Can you advise me what to do next? I want to help him feel more comfortable.
Sometimes caregivers asked me to teach them how to change dressings or stoma bags etc. I can teach their domestic helper as well.

Some typical conditions we saw of elders ageing at home includes UTI, bowels issues, skin issues, etc. We can help the caregivers manage these, along with the chronic conditions of our clients.
Community care personnel

Assess and deliver complete care plans for clients and/or family
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Social worker and/or community care manager and/or centre manager are typically the ones who help to liaise and coordinate care for the elders and work with their caregivers and families.
Usually these personnel work together closely as a team and have regular meetings on the updates on elders and family.

Eg: the teams at Tsao will monitor the bio-psycho-social well-being of the elder and caregivers, do necessary assessment and follow up with a complete care plan for discussion with the elder and/or caregiver.

When need be, they can refer you to other appropriate help or services too.
Some questions you can ask your community care personnel

I might not be able to bring my father to hospital for his regular check-ups. How can I get a medical escort just for one afternoon?

My uncle has been upset with the loss of mobility. He’s refusing to get out of his room at all. Will getting a mobility device help solve his problem? But it’s expensive… how can I afford one?

I need a respite from caregiving. How can I arrange for alternative care for my mother?

My mum went missing again! I think her dementia is worsening. She fought with the maid everyday and accused me of starving her. Help me understand why is this happening…

I really don’t want to send my grandpa to nursing home. Can you advise us on the options we have and how we can avoid nursing home?
Sometimes, they can do more than you think...

Some elders live on their own and they cannot understand complicated lawyers’ letters. They either leave the letters around for months or throw it away. We can come in and help them make sense of the letters and advise them what to do next.

We also walk the grounds to arrange help from the neighbourhood for some single elderly who need simple help or regular monitoring.

Some elders have little time left with their chronic conditions and we will come in to ensure if they have any unfulfilled wishes, to help make their wishes come true.

We also help single elderly plan and arrange their last rites before the time comes so that they can have a peace of mind.
Some home care and centre-based teams have additional Allied Health Professionals who can work with you on caring for your elders.

These includes occupational therapists, physiotherapists, dietician, speech therapist etc.
Occupational therapist

- uses therapies to develop and maintain a client’s capacity and function which will enable them to perform day-to-day tasks and roles essential to productive living, including self-care, daily living, leisure and work.

Counsellors

- help elders deal with their ageing and emotional well-being issues while aiding them to achieve their life goals and potential. Counsellors also support family caregivers of older persons, especially for them to engage in self-care and to minimise their stress. They do individual and/or group counselling therapies, at the homes of clients and/or at the eldercare centres.

Physiotherapist

- helps clients affected by injury, illness or disability through movement and exercise, manual therapy, education and advice. – with an aim to maintain health, manage pain and prevent disease.
Congratulations on reaching this far!

Take it slow and learn as you go. The caregiving journey can be a long and eventful one but remember, always ask when in doubt.

The care team typically works as a team and regular meetings were held to update one another on their clients’ status and well-being. So sometimes, telling anyone in the team your trouble and concern will get you the desired help and advice you need. Most importantly, do build a rapport with the team.