

IT'S LONG TERM CARE AWARENESS MONTH

Most people don't like to contemplate what could happen if their health declines. But the conversation is necessary when you truly care about what happens to the people you serve.

1. Do you have any personal experience with long-term care?

You can share statistics all day long, but nothing comes close to the stories clients may have about relatives or people they know that have been through the aging process and what they have experienced, both as those needing care and/or as caregivers. Asking this question allows you to help clients access the knowledge they already have about long term care in a less scary way as they aren't really talking about themselves. Talking about others' situations can help highlight their own situations.

2. Are you aware that the cost of long-term care depends on where you live?

Each state has its own costs for nursing homes, home health care, and semi-private vs. private rooms. You can check the cost of care map before your appointment to get a general idea of the cost of care in the client's area. You can contact our Long-Term Care team for this info or check our website in the Long-Term Care section. Knowing this information ahead of time can help you be ready to overcome cost objections. Many people simply are not aware of the cost of needing care.

3. Do you have family members who will help take care of you?

Many individuals hope to rely on family members in the event of a health care emergency. But what if family is far away or just doesn't have the skills to take care of someone with a disability? Talking this through may help them understand that sometimes, professional assistance is the only option. In this case, long-term care insurance can provide the funds needed for your clients to receive professional care for however long it's required.

4. Where will you live when you retire?

Many clients may hope to move out of state or to another country. Have they calculated what it would cost to receive care in their retirement destination?

5. Would your income stream change if you were to become disabled?

In most cases, clients would lose their paycheck if they become disabled. If they haven't retired yet, this could mean a big blow. Help them determine what would happen both with and without long term care insurance. Would their income increase, decrease, or stay the same? Showing them HOW it works may help them understand its value.

6. What is your medical history, including your family's medical background?

It's important to stress that the best time to make the decision regarding long-term care insurance is when clients are young enough and healthy enough to do it. By discussing their medical history and background with issues that may affect them can help you gain insight into what may be best suited for them, Long Term Care or otherwise. This is just smart business.

7. What other assets do you have to help pay for long-term care?

Depending on what other assets they have at their disposal, clients may need a policy that would pay for the total cost of long-term care or just one that would pay enough to help co-insure the risk. Other assets may include a pension, a retirement account, or other savings and investments.

8. Do you have dependents?

If your clients have a disabled spouse, child, or sibling, for example, what would happen to them if your clients were to become disabled?

9. What do you need from a long-term care policy?

Features like nursing home care and home health care may be valuable for some, but it's vital that clients do the research on long term care policies and the companies that sell them. Factors like whether a policy will pay for coverage outside the U.S. and the length of coverage period (e.g., for as long as they need or a set period of time) should also be discussed. Some clients may have need of riders, while others may not. Discussing options that are non-negotiable and those that are can help offer guidance as to what would work best for them.

10. Will Medicare and Medicaid help pay for long term care?

There is much to discuss in terms of what Medicaid and Medicare will and will not cover. Here are a few key points you may want to cover: Medicaid eligibility is based on modified adjusted gross income and may require your clients to spend their assets down to extremely low levels before Medicaid will pay the bill. Medicaid may pay a portion of the first 100 days in a nursing home, but nothing after that. Plus, it covers only "skilled" care at home, while most care needed at home is actually "custodial." Discussing what clients know and assume about Medicare and Medicaid will give them a clearer understanding of how LTC Insurance can really help.