How can women get the men in their families to help with caring for elderly parents?

Dorothy Horton, PsyD, answers your questions in her latest Ask Doctor Dee column.

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Q: How can women get the men in their families to help with caring for elderly parents?

A: When aging parents become ill or unable to care for themselves, women usually become caregivers or find themselves assigned to this role. But all siblings—regardless of gender—should share these responsibilities so one person isn't unfairly burdened.

If men aren't doing their fair share, write down what you do each day to care for your elderly parent. Propose specific tasks they can tackle. If no one takes on some of the work, request financial support so other arrangements can be made—for example, hiring a professional caregiver may make sense in certain instances.

Caretaking issues concerning parents should be addressed in a comfortable location when everyone is well rested and relaxed. A good way to start the conversation is to discuss your parent's health problems and the care and treatment doctors recommend.

Women should have their parent's medical information on hand so their brothers can read the assessment for themselves. If male relatives live far away, females should consider connecting with them via video chat in order to help them remain in contact with their parent.

Daughters, sisters and aunts must remember that it's only fair to ask sons, brothers and uncles to lend a hand with ailing parents.

After all, mothers and fathers provided love and care for children when they were young and unable to fend for themselves.

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