



Wellness Handbook

A photograph of an older woman with short, wavy grey hair, smiling broadly and looking off to the side. She is wearing a grey tank top with a purple inner lining. The background is a soft-focus beach scene with sand and a hazy sky. A large, semi-transparent blue heart shape is overlaid on the left side of the image, partially behind the word "Joy.".

Joy.

[qualicare.com](http://qualicare.com)





# Contents

**1**  
**Our Story**

**2**  
**The Qualicare 360° Approach**

**5**  
**Client Story:**  
**Donna's Dementia Care**

**6**  
**Client Story:**  
**Marie's Palliative Care**

**7**  
**Living Better**

**14**  
**Family Caregiver Burnout**

**15**  
**Advanced Care Planning**

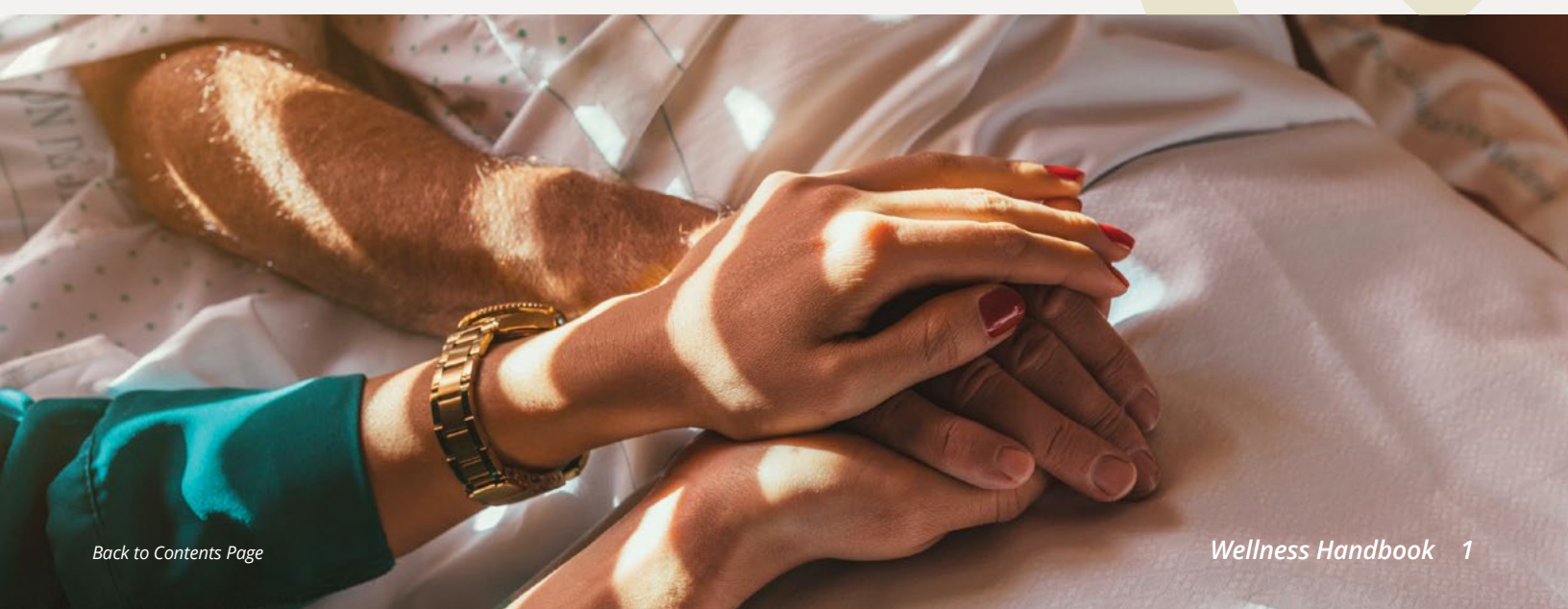
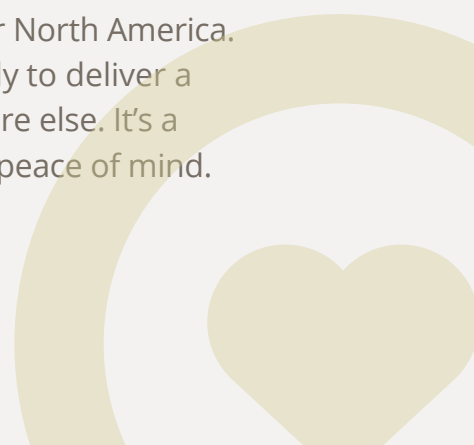
**16**  
**Managing Grief**



# Our Story

Over twenty years ago, Wayne and Andrea Nathanson were caring for Wayne's father Nardy as he battled Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS). It was during this difficult time they realized the breadth and depth of dedication, the resources and support required to provide the care Nardy needed. His care involved coordinating the efforts of over 40 care and health practitioners from doctors and nurses to pharmacists and physiotherapists. Fortunately, Andrea's nurse training, home care expertise and resourcefulness enabled Nardy to get the best care possible. It made the couple realize how they could help other families in similar situations. That's when they decided to start Qualicare.

Today, Qualicare helps families take care of loved ones all over North America. Their dedicated team of professional caregivers works tirelessly to deliver a standard of home care and quality of life unavailable anywhere else. It's a wide-ranging, comprehensive service with a simple goal: your peace of mind.



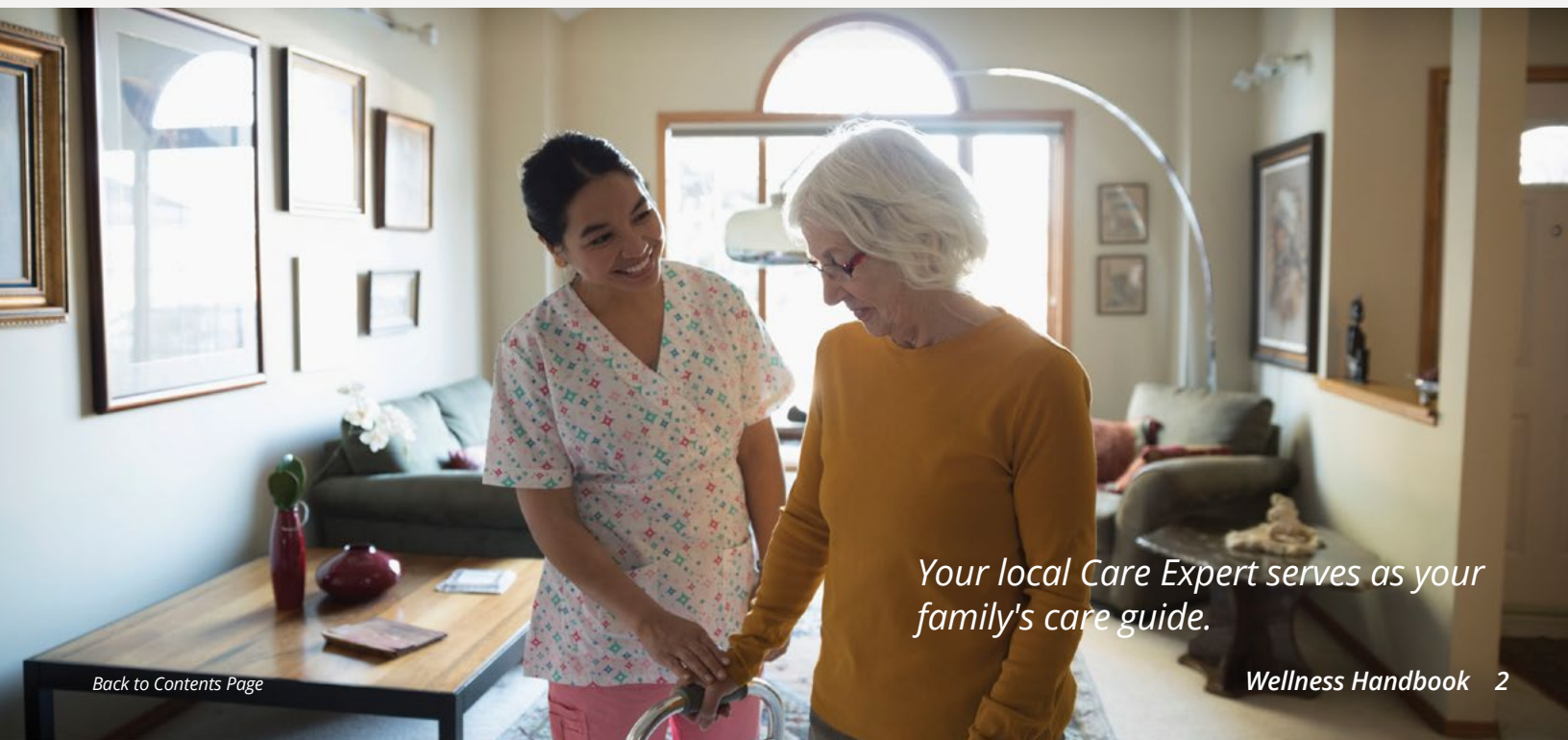


# Relax, we've got this

Only Qualicare offers the 360° Approach to family home care.

It starts with listening and taking the time to understand your situation. You'll be connected with your very own Care Expert, many of whom are Registered Nurses. They look at five areas of your care to make sure that nothing is missed. Then they develop a personalized 360° Care Plan that is complete, professional and tailored to you. From getting help with everyday tasks such as bathing and housekeeping, to managing complex health care, coordinating services with multiple partners to guiding you and your family during a crisis, they'll always be there for you. If your needs change, our 360° Care Plan changes with you.

Our Care Experts are experienced care professionals with roots in your community. They're experts in home care and know their way around our complex healthcare system so they can get you what's needed, when it's needed. But more than that, they care enough to listen and get to know you, so they can advocate for you and ensure you receive the best care possible.



*Your local Care Expert serves as your family's care guide.*



*Unique to Qualicare, we look at 5 areas of care to make sure everything is taken care of.*





*Everything you need, tailored to you.*

## Personal Care

For all those important, everyday tasks including:

- Dressing, bathing, hygiene
- Housekeeping
- Laundry
- Meal preparation
- Errands

## Specialized Care

Comprehensive care tailored to specific illnesses and injuries such as:

- Alzheimer's and dementia
- Stroke and brain injuries
- Palliative care
- Medical advocacy
- Nursing care
- Physiotherapy/occupational therapy

## Coordinated Care

Help sourcing and managing logistics and external support services required, including:

- Medical specialists
- Legal and financial specialists
- Navigating the health care system
- Accompaniment to/from appointments
- Hospital to home transition

## Emotional Care

Focuses on bringing emotional support and joy to our clients any way we can, such as:

- Day-to-day companionship
- A partner for favourite activities
- Accompaniment to special events and outings

## Family Care

Our care is designed for the whole family. That includes offering support and giving family caregivers a break, including:

- Respite care
- Scheduling services to accommodate family commitments
- Extra housekeeping and family meal preparation
- Guiding families through the caregiving process



# Client Story:

## *Donna's Dementia Care*

When Donna was diagnosed with dementia, she was living alone in Toronto, in the same house she had lived in for 40 years. She had a son, Peter, who lived in Dublin, Ireland. As her condition worsened, Peter was concerned about her safety and knew they both needed guidance and support as her dementia progressed. Peter contacted Qualicare, and after an in-home consultation where Peter was present via video conference, a custom 360° Care Plan was developed that included a caregiver that had specialized Dementia training. For two, 5-hour shifts a week, Donna's caregivers would accompany her to the grocery store and on walks, provide daily assistance with meals, memory exercises and coordinate transportation for a weekly visit to Donna's favourite hair salon.

### Adjusting Care for Progressing Needs

As her dementia progressed, Donna's care team helped with bathing, dressing, toileting and made sure she was taking all of her medications. Her care increased and now included a primary caregiver during the day and second caregiver overnight. Peter was emailed regularly with updates on his mother's condition.

### Transition to Community Facility

Donna was becoming more forgetful as her dementia progressed, and displayed signs of aggression and forgot to turn the stove off on more than one occasion. Donna's physician recommended she be placed in a specialized dementia facility for her own safety. Qualicare sourced appropriate facilities, booked appointments for Peter to visit with Donna while he was in town and then completed the required application paperwork. Qualicare also helped Donna pack up her beloved belongings and transition into her new home in her community - made easier by the ongoing care provided by her familiar care team. Qualicare continued caring for Donna after she moved, accompanying her on outings and providing regular companionship and a partner for activities.

# Client Story:

## *Marie's Palliative Care*

Marie was a healthy and independent 74-year-old when she was diagnosed with terminal breast cancer. Preparing for discharge after a recent hospitalization, her daughter Rose was overwhelmed with providing the care her mother needed along with taking care of her two small children and working a full-time job.

### The Initial 360° Care Plan

Marie and Rose met with Qualicare at home the day she was discharged from the hospital. Together with their local Care Expert, a customized 360° Care Plan was developed that included the services of a nurse for the administration of morphine and daily dressing changes. Her Care Plan also included personal support assistance with bathing, dressing and meal preparation. Her Care Expert helped source a rental hospital bed, walker and other safety equipment needed to be safe and comfortable at home. Marie was initially reluctant to have anyone assist her, but after three days she admitted she was very happy to have Qualicare's support.

### Changing Needs, Changing Services

During a regular visit by her Care Expert, Marie mentioned that she was sad to lose her mobility and the ability to visit her friends and grandchildren - so her caregivers helped make frequent Skype calls to loved ones. As a staunch Catholic her whole life, her Care Expert also arranged for her priest to visit Marie weekly.

As Marie's condition worsened, she stated that she did not want to return to the hospital, but wanted to stay at home for her remaining days. After conferring with the Qualicare team and Marie's physician, her Care Plan was revised to include specialized palliative care nursing staff that took care of Marie around the clock. During this stressful time, the care team also helped Rose with meal preparation and housekeeping so she could focus on spending time with Marie.

Marie's wish to spend the rest of her life at home, surrounded by her loved ones was honored, and our Care Expert was there to assist Rose as she said her final goodbyes to her mother.



# Living Better

## Preventing falls at home

Falls are the leading cause of injury among seniors, and every 13 seconds an older adult is treated in an emergency room for a fall\*. With preventative measures, most falls can be avoided.

### Primary causes of falls:

- Darkened staircases
- Cluttered areas
- Muscle weakness
- Loss of balance
- Acute illness
- History of falling
- Medication side effects

### How to prevent falls:

- Slow down and stay aware
- Wear non-slip shoes and socks. Ensure footwear is well-fitting and supportive
- Seek treatment for foot problems
- Consider an emergency response button, such as Lifeline
- Keep floors free from clutter, mats, rugs and electrical cords
- Install light switches at the top and bottom of all stairs
- Ensure handrails are tightly fastened to the wall
- Use safety equipment such as chair risers, canes and walkers
- Use grab bars and non-slip mats in the shower and on floors
- Eat a healthy diet, drink plenty of water and limit alcohol to avoid dizziness
- Ensure your kitchen is organized with items within reach
- Have your vision and hearing checked regularly

(\*Source: <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/older-adults#8>)

## What to do if you fall alone

It's a good idea to wear a medical alert device if you live alone. It can be worn on your wrist or around your neck for easy access. If you are alone when a fall occurs, follow these steps to get up safely and get help:

1. If you are in pain and unable to get up, call for help.
2. If you are not in too much pain, roll to your uninjured side. Rest until you feel strong enough to move.
3. Move on all fours towards the nearest support, such as a sturdy chair.
4. Bend one knee and use your supporting foot and arms to brace yourself.
5. Push yourself into a half-standing position and slowly turn yourself around to take a seat. Rest until you feel strong enough to call for help.

## How to help someone after a fall

It is important to let the person get up on their own; you should act only as a guide.

1. Calm the person down and let them remain lying down while you check for injuries. Ask if they can move.
2. If the person can move, gently help them roll onto their side to rest. Place two chairs nearby.
3. Move the person towards the chairs on all fours. Help the person get propped into a kneeling position, then a half-standing position by getting them to push themselves up. Place the second chair behind them.
4. Help them push up and sit back on the chair. Do not aggravate undetected injuries by lifting.
5. Call **911** if they're unable to move.

## Taking your medication safely

It is important to take medications exactly as prescribed by your doctor. Here are some tips for staying safe while on medication:

- **Keep yourself informed.** Ask the pharmacist about side effects, interactions with other drugs and safe storage.
- **Follow directions.** Read and save all instructions. Check the expiration dates and return expired and discontinued medications to the pharmacy.
- **Keep a list of your medications.** Note when they need to be taken, and any allergic reactions to be mindful of. Include over the counter meds.
- **Stick to one pharmacy.** Try to fill prescriptions from one pharmacy so drug interactions can be checked.
- **Review medications regularly.** Check in with your doctor, pharmacist and Care Expert on a regular basis.
- **Use a pill organizer or blister pack.** This is especially helpful if you are on more than one medication. The pharmacy can provide you with one.
- **Never start new medications alone.** If you have a severe allergic reaction, you'll need immediate help.

## Eating healthy

Regular nutritious meals improve general health, outlook, mental acuteness, energy levels, and improve resistance to illness and disease and reduce healing times. They also help control some chronic health problems such as heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, and diabetes. Nutrition plans should be customized by a Registered Dietitian or Nutritionist for specific medical conditions.

If you are healthy overall, eating well is also easy:

- Follow the national Food Guide
- Eat colorful fruits, leafy vegetables
- Go for whole grains
- Choose lean protein sources
- Avoid processed food
- Choose unsaturated fats such as fish and nuts
- Limit alcohol intake
- Drink lots of water
- Cut down on sugar and salt
- Avoid overeating



Have plenty of  
vegetables and fruits

Eat protein foods

Make water  
your drink  
of choice

Choose whole  
grain foods



# Sundowning

## What is Sundowning?

About 66% of people with Alzheimer's and dementia experience a symptom known as sundowning. As the day progresses – and the sun goes down – they become more confused and anxious, even more aggressive. It's frustrating for both the person and their caregiver, because they have no control over it. While sundowning can start at any time, it tends to peak in the middle stages of the disease, before lessening. Knowing what behaviours to look for can help lessen the frustration for both the person with Alzheimer's or dementia and their caregiver.

Signs include:

- Increased late-day confusion
- Unprovoked aggression
- Hallucinations or delusions
- Pacing, wandering away – even from home
- Difficulty understanding or doing tasks that were fine earlier in the day

## Tips to ease sundowning:



### Stick to a schedule

- Stick to a regular daily schedule
- Avoid making changes to your routine or alter it as little as possible



## Light up the night

- Keep your home brightly lit in the afternoon and evening
- Create a quiet area within your home with bright light and soothing music

## Stay active

- Get some exercise
- Allow short naps during the day (maximum 20 minutes).
- Too much sleep keeps dementia and Alzheimer's patients awake at night.



## Minimize stress

- Promote positive interactions and memories in the evening
- If you sense frustration, sometimes a soothing hand can be comforting





## The importance of hydration

Staying hydrated is crucial for overall health and well-being. As a general rule, you should drink 6-8 glasses of water each day. Water helps improve:

- Digestion and circulation
- Regulation of body temperature
- Kidney function
- Blood pressure
- Bowel function

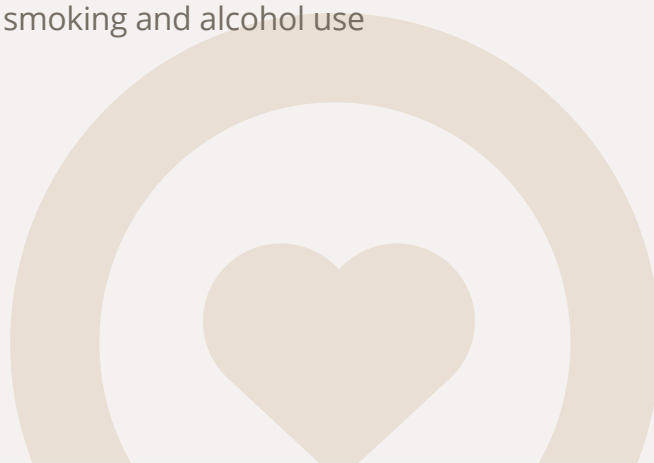
## Good hand hygiene

Washing your hands correctly greatly reduces the chances of spreading germs and causing illness or disease: Hands should be washed whenever:

- Coughing or sneezing into your hands or after blowing your nose
- Before and after caring for a person
- After touching commonly used public surfaces or shared items
- After returning home from work, school or outdoor activities
- Handling or touching animals and pets
- Before inserting or removing contact lenses
- Before preparing or eating food
- Before and after handling uncooked foods
- After handling garbage
- After using the restroom

## Other tips to remain healthy:

1. Engage in physical activity for 30 minutes a day
2. Keep your brain active with activities, puzzles and games
3. Eat nutritious foods
4. Limit your stress
5. Sleep well
6. Reduce smoking and alcohol use



# Family Caregiver Burnout

The emotional and physical demands of caring for a loved one can lead to burnout. That's why time to rest and recharge is important. Look into respite care or enlist family and friends who live near you to run errands, bring a hot meal, or tend to your loved one who needs care so you can take break. Keep the following in mind:

- **Speak up.** If you have thoughts about how to improve the situation, express them.
- **Spread the responsibility.** Get family members involved. One can take care of medical responsibilities, another finances and another with groceries and errands.
- **Set up regular check-ins.** Ask family or friends to provide updates to the rest of the care team.
- **Say yes to offers of assistance.** Have a list of small tasks others can take care of.
- **Relinquish control.** People will be less likely to help if you give orders, or insist on doing everything your way.

## Signs of caregiver burnout

- **Anxiety/Stress.** Changes in sleep patterns and appetite/weight.
- **Exhaustion.** Emotional or physical exhaustion can cause you to become sick more often.
- **Changes in mood/behavior.** Irritability, hopelessness, or a feeling life is out of control
- **Withdrawal.** Losing interest and withdrawing from activities, friends or loved ones
- **Depression.** Resulting from guilt of perceived inability to perform caregiving role

If you recognize any of these, get help immediately. Talk to family, friends or a medical professional.

From extra help for a few hours a week or 24/7 care, Qualicare can help improve everyone's quality of life and avoid caregiver burnout.

# Advanced Care Planning

## *Taking Care*

Many people are unprepared to deal with legal and financial issues when an expected or unexpected end of life situation occurs. It's important to plan for the future. That includes preparing an "Advanced Directive". Advanced Directives are legally binding instructions regarding an individual's wishes with respect to future health care decisions.

### How to prepare Advanced Directives:

1. **Treatment Preferences:** Speak with your doctor about how your existing health condition might influence your treatment preferences in the future. Your personal values and beliefs are important considerations, but there are others your doctor can help with.
2. **Identify Specifics:** Provide specific instructions regarding medical issues, such as a blood transfusion or dialysis. Consider other medical issues that may arise such as "Do Not Resuscitate (DNR)", or organ and tissue donation.
3. **Who Will Make Decisions:** This person can be a spouse; family member or friend. You can decide how much authority this person has over your medical care, and you can name them as your Power of Attorney for Health.
4. **Make It Official:** Once you understand the types of decisions and have identified a Power of Attorney, you must complete a legal form detailing your wishes. An attorney can help but is not required: online information packages are also available.
5. **Make Your Wishes Known:** Give copies of your Advanced Directive to your Power of Attorney and tell family members and friends where you keep a copy.
6. **Review Your Decisions.** Review the directives every five years or more, and consider changing them if your situation or health changes.

If you do not have an Advanced Directive and are unable to speak for yourself, the state/province will assign someone to make those medical decisions. It will likely be your spouse or children if they are adults.



# Managing Grief

Grief can have a powerful effect on your daily life. Remember:

- There are no bad or wrong feelings when it comes to grieving
- Set aside time every day to allow for the grieving process
- Don't try to talk or reason yourself out of your feelings
- Talk to others who have gone through similar losses
- Don't try to be superhero: accept all the help you can get
- Find someone you trust to talk to

While grieving, be extra cautious about your health choices. Studies indicate added stress can limit your ability to control unwanted behaviors, such as making poor dietary choices. Getting enough rest and exercise, proper nourishment, and consistent social support is vital to working your way through the grief process. If you're uncertain about whether your grieving process is normal, consult your health care professional.

## An Attitude of Gratitude

Did you know that gratitude changes the brain? It makes us feel better and happier as a whole. There are many ways gratitude can improve your life. And we all have lots to be grateful about. Gratitude starts a chain reaction to happiness. Happiness isn't about getting what you want, but loving what you have.

### Have questions? We can help

Connect with your local Care Expert  
or visit **[qualicare.com](https://www.qualicare.com)**



## Contact Us

Have questions? We can help.  
Connect with your local Care Expert by visiting

**[qualicare.com](https://www.qualicare.com)**