

# GLOW

## NEWSLETTER

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## Safety vs. Autonomy

# RESOLVING THE SAFETY TUG-OF-WAR

It is an age-old tug-of-war. Adult children worry about their older parents because they care. But older adults have a different perspective: They want their autonomy. Physician and best-selling author Atul Gawande captured it best: We all want autonomy for ourselves and safety for those we love (no matter what their age).

And so we have this natural tension as we age, one that Lifesprk Life Care Managers (LCMs) who are nurses, encounter on a regular basis.

LCM Mary Claire O'Brien, RN, explains that a main goal is to keep the lines of communication open for both the client and family to share their concerns and perspectives. It all starts with building trust. "Our goal is to encourage open, candid, honest communication. People see it is a gift to have someone – their LCM – with whom they can share their frustrations, concerns, hopes, fears, and that creates peace of mind," adds Mary Claire. "The deeper the relationship and the longer we know our clients and families," she continues, "the more we are able to take the stress off them, enabling them to talk openly and ask the questions they may be reluctant to bring up on their own."



As Kathy Christians, RN, Director of Life Care Integration, explains, seniors may not want to worry their children so they stop sharing concerns. Having the LCM as a third-party to facilitate these discussions can be so beneficial. The LCM can ask questions to prompt considerations that the family hasn't thought of or experienced. They can also identify resources and options they may not even have realized were available," says Kathy. "By listening and communicating reflectively on what we have heard from the client and the family, we as LCMs are then able to focus holistically on the client's needs AND wishes," says Julie Flanagan, RN, Campus Director of Life Care. "Clients and families

are reassured when they know the LCM understands the client's wishes because they then know the LCM will focus on what is best for the client."

Seniors want to be seen for whom they are – not their diagnosis, their condition, or their limitations. "I tell my clients 'you are not defined by your diagnosis,'" stresses Mary Claire. "That only tells me one part of your story, not your whole story. We need that fuller picture to help people make good choices for themselves."

### Lifesprk LCMs share these tips for clients and families facing these safety concerns:

**Engage your LCM in the dialogue** – Helping clients and families broach these discussions is one of the main benefits of the Lifesprk service which helps, as Mary Claire explains, to "broaden the safety net for the client and family. You are not in this alone."

**Ensure everyone understands the client's goals AND wishes** – "The Lifesprk Discovery process helps everyone know the client's preferred lifestyle choices so we can work together as a team to identify options that reflect those values," adds Julie.

**One conversation is not enough** – Growing older involves ongoing changes and so clients and families continue to face different issues over time that will need to be addressed.

**Create a safe place for expressing concerns** – These tensions can become fractious and create real family rifts, says Mary Claire. That's why everyone needs the opportunity to vent without guilt or ramifications, to feel heard, and relieve some pressure.

**Don't fear the conversation** – Far from seizing control from anyone, these conversations are really about ensuring all sides feel heard in the context of wanting what is best for the client based on his or her wishes.



# LIFESPRK Q&A

**QUESTION:** What’s the difference between a nurse and a Life Care Manager (LCMs)?

**ANSWER:** “There are many differences but I believe sparking lives is one of the most effective and dramatic differences our LCMs provide and can only be done when we look at the whole-person, not just their diagnosis,” answers Kathy Christians, RN, Director, Life Care Integration for Lifesprk. “With most private-pay home care services, you get a home health aide with some nursing oversight. The missing piece is the guidance from a licensed professional who can work with the individual, identify their goals, and develop a plan that looks at the whole person, and then coordinate the various services and support needed to reach a person’s goals. The nursing role at many home care companies is narrowly focused on supervising the aide and monitoring a specific medical condition or episode.

That’s one of the reasons Lifesprk created the Life Care Manager (LCM) role. According to Kathy, LCMs are registered nurses with extensive home and care management expertise who provide personalized care and guidance that proactively manages people’s wellbeing and can assist with everything from accompanying seniors to doctor’s appointment and managing medications to advocacy, socialization, navigating resources, and dealing with changing needs. Each client gets a dedicated LCM who becomes the go-to person for the client and family for all aspects of the client’s wellbeing - including purpose and passion. A person’s feeling of purpose and passion can have a significant impact on their overall happiness and well-being.

*This chart provides a quick glance of some of the major differences:*

Life Care Manager (Nurse)	Traditional Nurse
<i>Builds long-term relationship (to remove gaps in care)</i>	<i>Episodic (they help with just the health episode)</i>
<i>Whole person focused (7 elements of wellbeing)</i>	<i>Medically focused (just the medical issue)</i>
<i>Client-driven</i>	<i>Documentation/reimbursement-driven</i>
<i>Purposeful conversations about goals</i>	<i>Assesses</i>
<i>Enrichment driven</i>	<i>Crisis driven</i>
<i>Proactive</i>	<i>Reactive</i>
<i>Take time needed to achieve goals</i>	<i>Limited in visits and timeframe</i>
<i>Assist across all settings</i>	<i>Only help with the setting you are in</i>
<i>Unlimited scope of resources</i>	<i>Narrow scope of resources</i>
<i>Create opportunities for wishes/purpose and passion</i>	<i>Limited to just the needs of health episode</i>
<i>Central communication and coordination with family and healthcare professionals</i>	<i>Limited coordination and communication</i>
<i>Educator/collaborates with caregiver</i>	<i>Provides oversight of caregiver</i>
<i>Sparks lives</i>	<i>Provides care</i>

**Have more questions? Reach out to Lifesprk Navigation.**

## QUALITY TIME

For the past three years, Kaibeh has cared for Virginia in her home. “I look forward to seeing her each week. We sit, talk, laugh, and she helps me with the things I need,” says Virginia. Kaibeh adds “Virginia makes my job easier. I never tell her no. While we are together, I don’t even look at the time. Whenever she needs me, I am there for her.” Every detail is done with care – trips to the hair salon or to Target to pick up medications. Or a quick lunch where everyone in the kitchen knows them, right down to Kaibeh’s ritual of putting Virginia’s nightgown and robe gently across her bed each visit so she’s ready for bed at night. Why? Because, Kaibeh emphasizes, “she deserves it.”

**DID YOU KNOW.** . . . People with a high sense of purpose are less likely to have a stroke, heart attack or coronary artery disease requiring a stent or bypass surgery. That’s according to Dr. Randy Cohen, a cardiologist at Mount Sinai St. Luke’s-Roosevelt Hospital in NYC.

# REAL PEOPLE, REAL RESULTS: Jonathan Weinhold

Music was Jonathan Weinhold's passion. When his wife, Mary, passed away seven years ago, he lost his inspiration to play the piano and for years, the music sat there untouched. Since then his health has declined.

Jonathan recalled those moments: "I landed myself in a situation where I was unsafe at home, three different hospitalizations, several falls and a myriad of health issues. But I wasn't ready to leave my home. It's a very difficult decision to leave behind my memories of Mary and my son growing up. Even after the first two falls I was holding out on hopes of remaining home. But my son was concerned and when the third fall came I knew in my heart – my family was right, I have to move on. So I made the decision to explore options."

He ended up moving to Brightondale Assisted Living, a SilverCrest property that partners with Lifesprk, and met Linda Brixius, RN, Director, Life Care Manager (LCM) and



*Sandi Silseth, RN, Lifesprk Life Care Manager and Jonathan Weinhold, Lifesprk Client*

soon after Sandi Silseth, RN, LCM. "When I moved in I instantly felt safe at home. The welcoming, family environment is just what I needed.

Sandi has become my mentor and has taken me under her wing in a way that is more than helpful with my complex health issues."

But something unexpected happened when he moved.

"I remember the moment so vividly. My physical therapist (PT) was looking for equipment to use as part of my strength training. I recalled seeing a few dumbbells tucked away in a room on the second floor so we ventured upstairs. There were chairs in the room and in the middle a baby grand piano. My PT's eyes went to the dumbbells, mine went to the piano, and the man playing it. As I watched him play something inside me stirred – something I thought was gone.

"Later at dinner I couldn't shake that feeling. It was as if the music was whispering to me – beckoning me to come back. The urge was too intense so I walked upstairs alone to quiet the whispers. The room was dark, no one was there, just the piano and me – I flipped on the light and sat down in front of it. Running my fingers across the ivory I closed my eyes and was lost in the emotion of it all. I played and played from memory, losing myself completely.

"When I opened my eyes the room was full of people. Unbeknownst to me they had heard the music playing



*Jonathan rehearsing on his keyboard - Play On!*

and quietly joined the impromptu concert. I didn't expect this passion of mine to resurface but there it was.

"Sandi gives me that encouragement to keep me healthy so I can do what makes me whole," said Jonathan.

"My health continues to be an issue but we work hard to keep it balanced. For me the relationship between Sandi and the people I've met here like Activity Director Su Stigney has been about human kindness. That's paramount. Sandi's true warmth and caring is felt in how she treats me. My neighbors, caregivers and staff at Brightondale make me feel like I'm part of a family. I'm very pleased with the decision I made – it's as if things are working in harmony together."



Whole Person Senior Care

# HOW TECH CAN OPEN YOUR WORLD



**amazon alexa**

Donna and Duane McGough are having a blast with 'Alexa' thanks to Charles Lindemann, Lifesprk's IT Operations Specialist, who provided them with a connection – figuratively and literally – to a technology tool that works for them. Donna is legally blind and many devices on the market were not a good option for her poor vision. She desperately wanted to engage with the Internet.

Their Life Care Manager, Kristine Pederson, suggested an Amazon Alexa and the McGough's nieces and nephews helped them get one. The problem: they didn't know how to set it up so they called Kristine for help. "When I need help with my laptop," laughed Kristine, "I reach out to Lifesprk's IT department, I thought perhaps they could help with this, too."

Charles Lindemann, Lifesprk IT Operations Specialist, arrived at the McGough's home and personally assisted them in getting Alexa up and running but they didn't have the required Internet service they needed to make it work properly. Technology can be a powerful tool for seniors but it can be costly and complicated due to contracts and price. "They were worried about signing up for a new cable service with increasing costs just to use their Alexa," explained Charles. "We weren't giving up."

They reached out to Lifesprk's operations team and discovered they were able to offer the McGough's Internet service through



*Lifesprk client, Donna McGough, with Charles Lindemann, Lifesprk IT Operations Specialist and 'Alexa'*

Lifesprk's business pricing which meant no contract and half the price.

When Kristine visits with them now she finds them laughing in their room at the jokes 'Alexa' is telling them or listening to the weather, news from Washington, DC and the music of Doc Severenson, Sound of Music, and Billy Joel. "Duane enjoys thinking of questions to ask 'Alexa' and he intently listens for the answers," said Kristine. "It's providing him with a great activity to help with the progression of dementia he is experiencing. This is the spark they both needed and they love Charles for helping them connect to it. It's a good example of services Lifesprk can offer above and beyond a traditional home care company."

A good reminder – Lifesprk can connect you to many things beyond care. The only thing you need to do is ask, we'll do the rest so you have what you need to live a sparked life.

Check out Lifesprk's blog on [Tech Suggestions for Seniors at lifesprk.com/technologyadvicefor-seniors](https://lifesprk.com/technologyadvicefor-seniors)



## Lifesprk Home Health: Deficiency-Free Survey Despite Unprecedented Growth In Just 12 Months of Operations

One year after accepting our first Medicare home health client, Lifesprk Home Health has already served 700+ people in the Twin Cities and grown the census from 0 to 200 – marking us one of the fastest growing home health organizations in the country. And despite that tremendous growth, Lifesprk Home Health received a zero deficiency survey from the Minnesota Department of Public Health (MDH) in January. Very few home health agencies accomplish this growth in one year and maintain the consistency and accountability to receive zero deficiencies. "It's been quite a year – but it's our people and our model that has driven our success," said Paulette Duncan, RN, Director of Skilled Services (Home Health) for Lifesprk.

For more information about this survey visit: [lifesprk.com/deficiencyfree](https://lifesprk.com/deficiencyfree)



Whole Person Senior Care

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## Lifesprk Honored As Fast 50

**KEY TO GROWTH: WHOLE PERSON MODEL AND A GREAT CULTURE**

Lifesprk’s momentum has been ‘sparked’ by winning the Fast 50 award from the *Minneapolis/St. Paul Business Journal*. “We are growing at a rapid pace,” said Joel Theisen, RN, CEO/Founder of Lifesprk. “This award demonstrates we are among the fastest growing private companies in Minnesota, and it also shows that people want what we are delivering.” Being named a Fast 50 company shows that people want a different aging experience that goes beyond traditional home care options to dramatically improve outcomes while lowering long-term costs for clients and health systems. “It’s our way of answering the call for creating a healthcare system that fits the demands of our aging population and puts people at the center of their wellbeing,” said Joel. “And of course, sparks lives, too.”

*Learn more, visit: [Lifesprk.com/change-on/fast50](http://Lifesprk.com/change-on/fast50)*



## Changing Aging with A SMILE AND A ROSE

Valentine’s Day has come and gone but the smiles left behind on the faces of seniors across the Twin Cities remain strong. In February, Lifesprk partnered with the Wish of A Lifetime program to sponsor the CupidCrew who delivered 1000 roses to seniors living at four SilverCrest Properties. Students from Eden Prairie High School and Holy Family Academy along with Lifesprk and SilverCrest team members volunteered their time to deliver the roses.

We’d like to keep you informed, however if you don’t wish to continue receiving this newsletter or if your mailing label isn’t correct, please let us know. Call: (952) 345-8770 or [ShineOn@lifesprk.com](mailto:ShineOn@lifesprk.com).

### Keep your life on track so you can focus on what’s most important to you.

Lifesprk is changing the experience for people in the second half of life. What does that mean for you?  
It means a better experience, with more opportunities to shine the way you want.

We’ll help you discover your priorities and help you achieve your goals. More than shining, you’ll GLOW.

To learn more call or visit today

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