

## **Sittercity.com Offers the Sandwich Generation A Guiltless Path to Comfort**

### *How to Hold an Effective Family Meeting Introducing Senior Care*

#### **THE STORY ANGLE:**

You peer around the corner to catch a glimpse of the tall, aging man standing over the coffee pot, fumbling with the coffee filter. You're nervous. You shift around uncomfortably and run through your talking points silently one last time – it's now or never. You're about to have one of the toughest discussions of your life and all you can think about are the implications of this strange role reversal.

"Oh, hi, son," he says with a smile. "You hadn't made coffee yet, so I tried, but I'm just not sure what to--"

"Dad, I think you need an outside caregiver," you blurt out. Silence.

Well, *that* could have gone better.

According to the National Alliance for Caregiving and AARP, 34 million adults care for someone age 50 or older – and many of those caregivers battle the emotional entanglement of guilt, love and stress that come with the job. *They've taken care of me my whole life so I should be able to take care of them. I know I'm stressed and busy, but I don't want Dad to feel abandoned.*

Whether a senior is active and independent or in need of more involved care, it's unbelievably difficult for families to even broach the topic of hiring an outside caregiver in the first place... until now.

#### **WHAT SITTERCITY CAN PROVIDE TO YOUR AUDIENCE:**

**Sittercity.com would like to launch its Senior Care Division exclusively on the XXX Show** by providing your audience with invaluable tips for how to hold that difficult family meeting to discuss various senior care options.

Sittercity.com, America's largest and most trusted online network of caregivers, provides access to hundreds of thousands of senior care providers nationwide – from companions to drivers to nurses – who are able to help families find relief without hindering seniors' independence. Genevieve Thiers, founder and CEO of Sittercity.com (**and iVillage contributor-if for Today Show**), can provide the XXX Show audience **three critical methods** for approaching such a sensitive discussion in a family meeting.

- **Pre-meeting preparations**
  - Include anyone who will be a part of the caregiving team, but don't invite more than 6 or 7 people
  - Include the senior unless he has dementia and may misunderstand the meeting's purpose (in which case, at least exclude him from this first meeting)
  - If family members live far away, make use of web cams and/or speaker phones so that they may be involved as well
  - Prepare an agenda and send it to participants ahead of time so they can think about the topic(s) and prepare what they'd like to say
  - Choose a familiar, comfortable location with little distraction

- **Mid-meeting communication tips**
  - Address the most important issues first so they receive the most attention
  - Don't start off by stating that a decision has been made; instead, open it with a question like, "How are you doing on your own, Dad? Are you finding it difficult to do some things?"
  - Ask the senior what he can do about the challenges he's facing and help him jot down the pros and cons of the alternatives
  - Don't try to solve all the problems at once – instead, record them as they arise and address them during the "problem solving" portion of the agenda, at the end
  - Use "I" instead of "you" and try to find things you can agree with
  
- **The dos and don'ts of addressing a senior's concerns**
  - DO use "reflective listening" instead of offering reassurances ("Don't worry, you'll be fine") or offering immediate solutions ("If you're worried about XYZ, then we'll just do this..."). This means you should rephrase what your aging loved one said to convey your understanding, support and encouragement.
  - Example: If your senior says, "Forget it! You'll never find someone I'll like anyway," you can say, "I understand you don't want to be around someone with whom you don't get along – no one likes that!" (Remember, each caregiver profile on Sittercity.com has more than 42 different pieces of information on each senior companion – including references, background checks, photos, skills and training – so that each senior is paired with a truly compatible caregiver.)
  - DON'T interrupt, even if the senior reminisces about the past. Sifting through memories helps the senior accept this new transition, so encourage it!

**THE VISUAL:**

Sittercity will also provide b-roll of a success story with a Sittercity family that recently held a meeting with their aging loved one regarding senior care, feedback on how the meeting went, as well as reactions from the senior himself. We can also provide this family for an in-studio interview alongside Thiers.

**INTERESTED? CONTACT:**

  
 Director of PR  
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**About Sittercity:**

Sittercity.com®, the inventor of online caregiving, is America's largest and most trusted online source for child care, pet care, senior care, housesitting, housekeeping and tutoring. As a network of hundreds of thousands of caregivers nationwide, Sittercity helps families and individuals find the perfect in-home care provider quickly, easily and safely by using the company's four-step screening process, which includes checking references, reading caregiver reviews, conducting interviews and utilizing free access to background checks. Sitter profiles also come with photos, experience, training, safety skills, availability calendars, reviews and more. Registration for sitters is free, and care seekers pay as little as \$8 per month for a membership, which gives them unlimited ability to post jobs, and search, contact and hire sitters in their areas. A true pioneer in its field, Sittercity.com has been featured by hundreds of media outlets, from the Today Show to the Big Idea with Donny Deutsch to the Wall Street Journal. Sittercity has also received twelve national awards, including a U.S. Small Business Administration award in 2006 from President Bush, and three international awards, including first place in the prestigious UPS "Out of the Box" Small Business contest. For more information, visit the company Web site at [www.sittercity.com](http://www.sittercity.com).