

# Caring and Experienced

## CATHERINE JONAS IS ON A MISSION TO HELP AGING FAMILY MEMBERS PRESERVE THEIR INDEPENDENCE



**T**he founder of CJ & Associates Care Consulting, Catherine Jonas, is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist and a Certified Geriatric Case Manager with expertise in the field of aging, disability and end of life care for over 20 years. Her inspiration to create her own company likely started when she was just a little girl, growing up in Santa Monica.

She remembers watching her own mother care for her grandmother who was diagnosed with early onset dementia. Her grandmother was only 64. "I watched my mother manage the care of my grandma and the care of me and my brother, which was very stressful on the family dynamic," says Catherine.

As an adult, she got her Master's degree in Marriage and Family Counseling and psychotherapy. Her very first internship was at a counseling center for aging adults in Santa Monica. "That really started my career path wanting to work with the older adult population, both with counseling and case management," she says.

After working in different hospital settings she ran the Geriatric Out-Patient Day Program at Cedars Sinai Department of Psychiatry for many years, she knew she could provide an even higher level of care to the older adult population – especially for those with major neurocognitive impairment. "I wanted to be very specialized with all forms

of chronic, degenerative disorders like dementia, stroke or Parkinson's disease," she says.

Her clients are older adults who live alone, with families who either live out of town or simply very busy. Catherine's company fills in the gap when an individual needs help managing their medical, psychosocial and possibly their legal/financial affairs.

On the day we spoke to Catherine, she had just gone into a client's home to fill up her medication boxes. "Someone with dementia isn't going to remember to do that," she says. She and her other case managers check in on their clients at least once a week to make sure they're safe, and someone is on call 24/7 in case there's an emergency. "If there's a fall and they break their hip, they can call us, or their family can call us. We also take our clients to doctor appointments. We're in the exam room with them and we report back to the family," Catherine says.

In one of her biggest cases, Catherine received a call from a family in Chicago, Ill. "We needed to move the client from Chicago to Los Angeles. We had to arrange all of her home care, get her new doctors, and pretty much transplant all of her care from Chicago to here and find her an apartment. We do everything – we'll move your loved one from a home residence to an assisted living facility or we'll fly them across the country. We'll do everything that needs to be done to keep your loved one safe," she says.

Catherine also does counseling for adult children of parents affected by neurodegenerative disorders.

Her business is made even stronger by her world-renowned collaborators. She says she contracts with the UCLA Alzheimer's and Dementia Program within the Department of Geriatrics at UCLA. They also work in close collaboration with the Brain Health Team at Providence St. John's Pacific Neuroscience Institute (PNI)."

For Catherine, the work is deeply meaningful. She puts a lot into her business but gets a lot back in return. She started the company just five years ago as the sole proprietor but now has numerous case managers who have joined her team. Clearly, the hard work has paid off. "We're expanding by leaps and bounds!" Catherine says. ■

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