

## Ask Miriam...

Individuals and families in the community are faced with challenging issues and concerns regarding their social, emotional and psychological health. Through the cooperation of **The Jewish World**, Jewish Family Services will offer responses.

### Q. Dear Miriam,

*Winter is approaching once again and my parents are another year older. They still live in their home and have managed fairly well up to now.*

*I have noticed some changes in the past year, and I am concerned about them.*

*They do not always ask for help when they need it.*

*How can I convince them to set up the services they may need for the upcoming winter, such as snow cleaning, winterizing, etc.?*

**Concerned**

### A. Dear Concerned,

The key line in your letter was, "They will not always ask for help when they need it." For many older adults the issue is not necessarily financial. Asking for help means that you are not managing so well any more and that is not something easily accepted or reported.

One loses control of many things in the aging process; death of friends and relatives, physical health, physical strength, etc.

The main thing to do is to help your parents understand that by accepting some help, they are increasing their ability to manage longer in their current environment. The emphasis should be on how they can make things happen, not what they are no longer able to do.

If possible, visit your parents and discuss with them how they have planned for the winter and bad weather. Include them in the process of identifying potential problems and figuring out how to solve the problems. You could suggest that they contact an agency like Jewish Family Services and meet the senior adult staff and develop a relationship.

Staff could check in on them on a regular basis.

### Q. Dear Miriam,

*Thanksgiving is approaching and I would love to have the family come together at our home.*

*My daughter is in a gay relationship and has not come to family gatherings very often.*

*We were initially upset with this relationship, but have come to accept the fact that she is happy.*

*How can we let her know that we would like her to rejoin family gatherings and we will welcome her partner?*

**Planning for Thanksgiving**

### A. Dear Planning for Thanksgiving,

I can't tell from your letter how many in the family has had difficulty with her gay relationship. She may have a sense that she and her partner will be tolerated, but not openly embraced.

A large family gathering is not the best setting to start a new relationship.

You say you would welcome your daughter and her partner, but do you know if the rest of the family is on the same page?

Extend the invitation for Thanksgiving, but don't feel hurt if she doesn't take you up on it.

I suggest that you invite your daughter and her partner to come at another time when you have private time with them to start the process of getting to know them as a couple. During that visit invite one or two relatives to a meal and let people get to know each other. You are modeling the behaviors you expect from the rest of the family.

Hopefully, by the next holiday for which you have a large gathering, everyone will get together and celebrate.

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Miriam Adler, A.C.S.W., C.S.W., is assistant director of J.F.S. She answers most frequently asked questions. Please send questions to "Ask Miriam," c/o Jewish Family Services of NENY, 877 Madison Ave., Albany, NY 12208 or e-mail [madler@jfsneny.org](mailto:madler@jfsneny.org) or call 518-482-8856.