

A Hug For Your Winchester Aging Parents

Many times when we go into a home for homecare we provide meal preparation, medication reminders, running errands, and other services your aging parents may need. These address their physical needs, which are very important for maintaining their health and safety.

However, at FirstLight HomeCare Winchester, we are also concerned with your parents' *emotional* needs; their state of mind and their psychological well-being. Often we provide companionship, a listening ear for their wealth of stories and wisdom that you have probably heard over and over. We eat meals with them, telling them our own funny stories and entertaining them by reading, playing cards or other games they may enjoy.

It's no secret that many seniors suffer from loneliness and depression. A study from the University of California in San Francisco shows that 18 percent of seniors live alone, while 43 percent report feeling lonely on a regular basis. Too often, they become isolated, finding it harder and harder to get together with their friends. If they can't drive, it may be difficult to get out and about. If they have grandchildren, they may find it hard to bridge the communication gap.

What's a great and simple way to combat loneliness? A hug.

Giving a Hug

Probably one of the most important services we provide at FirstLight HomeCare Winchester is a hug. Behind every caregiver hug is kindness, compassion and an open sentiment of friendship.

Hugs have proven to have many benefits. Besides the obvious ones, *Psychological Health* recently published a study at [Carnegie Mellon University](#) that revealed that hugs can lower stress and make you less prone to illness, warding off certain germs. [Research](#) by U.S. psychologists Karen Grewen and Karen Light has shown that when people hug the brain releases the chemical oxytocin. This encourages social bonding, increases our willingness to trust and decreases fear. Hugs have been shown to lower blood pressure, lower heart rate, and provide a tender gesture that generally makes the heart feel more warm and fuzzy. We didn't need science to tell us that! We experience the power of our hugs and care every day. When we put a smile on someone's face, when we know that we have made a difference in their life, it gives us the same warm feeling... like a hug.

So with the holidays winding down, don't forget to hug and show love for those you care about ... year round!