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ADVANTAGES OF THE SUPPORT TEAM MODEL

There are several advantages to a "team approach" to caring for an individual or family with longer term health care needs.

1) Time flexibility for volunteers

Each Support Team Member can decide from month to month how much time he or she has to offer on the Team. Some persons give four or five hours per week, while others may offer a couple of hours per month. When the work is coordinated on a Support Team, the assistance does not depend on one person.

2) A built-in-support system

The Support Team approach is the opposite of the lone ranger approach due to Team accountability. The Team meets monthly for one hour to:

- reflect on their experience together, and share joys as well as frustrations
- learn something new in continuing education that will help them be more effective in their work
- coordinate the upcoming month's duties by sharing the Care among many persons

3) A variety of skills are available

Everyone does not have to do the same thing on the Team. Some persons are better at preparing meals, cutting the grass, providing transportation, being a good listener, writing notes, or visiting, etc. Each person does what he or she is most comfortable doing.

4) A proven model

The Support Team model has been used by groups and organizations across the nation to support people with illness, frailty, disability, and grief. The model is flexible to meet almost any long term need. The Support Team Network in Birmingham, AL is a national resource on starting Support Teams. Project Compassion is a local resource in the Durham/Chapel Hill NC area.

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Adapted from the Support Team Network, www.supportteam.org