BILL'S HOME TECH
Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS

Helping a Parent from Afar

Screen sharing, shared passwords, trusted contacts and more — how to help from miles away, with their permission

A plain-English guide for families who live apart

Help that respects them — and works from anywhere

Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

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What's Inside

This guide is for grown children, nieces, nephews and friends who help a parent with technology from a distance — and for the parent, too. Read it in any order. Start with the first two chapters, because the tools work best when the trust is in place first. Every feature comes with what it actually does *for you both*, and slow step-by-step directions. Screens differ a little from device to device; if yours looks different, the idea is still the same.

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PART 1

Before You Start

Permission, dignity and a little preparation. The tools in this guide are easy; the trust is what makes them work. Start here.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. If you're reading this, chances are you love someone who lives a long way from you — a mom in another state, a dad two hours down the road, a parent who calls you every time the printer acts up or a strange message pops up on the screen. You want to help. You just can't drive over every time something goes wrong.

I'm Bill. I've spent more than 30 years helping people with their technology, and these days much of my work is with older adults here in Portage County, Ohio, and the families who look out for them. I wrote this guide the way I'd explain it at a kitchen table: patiently, in plain English, one step at a time.

What this guide will do for you

- Show you how to **see your parent's screen** from your own phone or computer — and, when they say yes, take the controls for a moment to fix things.
- Help you **share the important passwords** safely, so you're not stuck when you need to help.
- Set up **recovery and legacy contacts**, so nobody gets locked out of photos, email or accounts.
- Use **family features** — shared calendars, medication reminders, location sharing — with consent.
- Put a few **money guardrails** in place: a trusted contact at the bank, alerts, and a credit freeze.
- Keep scammers out, because the same tools that let you help can be misused by strangers.

Two promises before we start

First, **nothing in this guide takes control away from your parent.** Every tool here asks for their permission, and every one of them can be turned off. The goal is to help them stay independent longer, not to manage their life from afar.

Second, **you can't break anything by trying.** Screen sharing ends the moment either of you hangs up. Shared passwords can be un-shared. If something goes sideways, the chapters that follow tell you how to undo it.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Fewer frantic phone calls, fewer "I'll fix it at Thanksgiving" lists, and a lot less worry on both ends of the line. Your parent gets help in minutes instead of weeks, and you both get to spend your phone calls talking about something other than the Wi-Fi.

And I'm only a phone call away

Some jobs really are easier with a second pair of hands, especially the first setup. If you or your parent ever get stuck, call me at **(330) 200-8042**. No question is too small, and no one will be made to feel silly for asking.

Let's get started. You're about to become your family's favorite help desk — the patient kind.

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

Helping Without Taking Over

Before a single setting is changed, there's a conversation to have. The best long-distance helpers aren't the ones who know the most about technology. They're the ones their parent trusts to step in only when invited.

Start with permission, every time

Your parent is an adult who has run a household, raised a family and made a lifetime of decisions. Tech trouble doesn't change that. So the rule for this whole guide is simple: **ask first, explain what you're doing, and stop when they say stop.**

- **Ask before you look.** "Would it help if I could see your screen?" works far better than "Just let me in."
- **Say what you're about to do** before you do it: "I'm going to open Settings and turn on automatic updates."
- **Let them drive** whenever you can. Guiding their finger by voice teaches; taking over just fixes.
- **Don't read their messages, email or bank details** just because they're on screen. Look away from what isn't yours to see, and say so.
- **Agree on boundaries out loud.** Some parents are happy for you to handle everything; others want help only with the computer. Both are fine.

FROM BILL

A word from Bill

In my experience, the families who do best with remote help are the ones who treat it like being handed the car keys: a privilege that comes with a little extra care. A parent who feels respected calls you sooner when something looks wrong, and that's exactly what you want.

Having the conversation

If the topic feels touchy, frame it around what *they* get, not what you're worried about. A few openers that tend to go well:

- "I'd love to be able to fix things for you without making you wait until I visit."
- "If you ever get locked out of your email, I'd like to be able to help you get back in."
- "Let's set this up together so you're in charge, and I'm just the backup."

Pick a calm moment, not right after a scare. And make it a two-way street: offer to name your parent as *your* recovery contact too. That turns "you need help" into "we look out for each other."

Decide who does what

If you have brothers, sisters or a helpful neighbor, sort out roles early so your parent isn't getting three different sets of instructions. One person as the "tech lead" — with a backup — keeps things simple. Write it on the cheat-sheet in Chapter 24.

Role	What they do
Tech lead	Handles screen sharing, updates and passwords. Usually the most patient person, not the most technical.
Money backup	Named as a trusted contact at the bank or brokerage (Chapter 20). Watches alerts if your parent wants that.
Local helper	A neighbor, friend or nearby relative who can plug something in, reboot the router or check on them.
Your parent	Always the one who says yes or no. Every tool in this guide needs their okay.

STAY SAFE

Permission is also your protection

If your parent's memory is changing, talk with them — and, if needed, an elder-law attorney — about formal arrangements such as a power of attorney while they can still decide. Technology tools like the ones in this guide are not a substitute for legal authority over their money or accounts.

CHAPTER 3

The Long-Distance Starter Kit

You'll help much faster if you know what you're helping with. This chapter is a one-time inventory: the devices, the accounts and the people. It takes about an hour, ideally on a visit, and it saves you countless "which one is the blue one?" phone calls later.

Make a list of their devices

For each phone, tablet, computer and TV box, jot down:

- **What it is** — for example, "iPhone 15", "Samsung Galaxy A35", "HP laptop running Windows 11", "Chromebook".
- **The software version**. On an iPhone it's in **Settings** > **General** > **About**. On Windows it's in **Settings** > **System** > **About**.
- **How it gets online** — home Wi-Fi, cellular, or both — and who the internet and phone companies are.
- **Where it lives** in the house, so a local helper can find it.

> **TIP**
>
> **Take a photo of each screen's About page**
>
> On your visit, open the About screen on each device and take a picture of it with your own phone. Now you have the exact model and version on hand whenever your parent calls, without asking them to dig for it.

List the accounts that matter most

You don't need every website they've ever signed up for. You need the handful that unlock everything else:

1. Their **main email account** (Gmail, Outlook, Yahoo, AOL or their internet company's email). Email is the key that resets every other password.
2. Their **Apple Account** (if they use an iPhone, iPad or Mac) or **Google Account** (if they use Android or a Chromebook).
3. Their **phone carrier** account — Verizon, AT&T, T-Mobile, Consumer Cellular and so on.
4. Their **bank and credit card** websites.
5. **Medicare, Social Security and health portals** (MyChart and similar).

6. **Streaming and subscriptions** that cost money each month.

Don't write passwords on this list. Chapter 11 shows you how to share them safely in a password manager instead. The list is just so you both know what exists.

Know who to call

Who	What to note
Internet company	Name, account number, support phone (from a bill, not from a web search)
Phone carrier	Name, account PIN if they have one, support number
Bank	The number on the back of their debit card
Doctor's office & pharmacy	Main numbers and patient portal name
Local helper	Name and phone of someone nearby with a key

SCAM ALERT

Get support numbers from a bill or card, never a search result

Scammers buy search ads and post fake "customer service" numbers for banks, Amazon, Apple and printer companies. When you or your parent need to call a company, use the number printed on a statement, the back of a card, or the company's own app.

Find a local helper

Some problems can't be solved through a screen: an unplugged router, a dead battery, a TV on the wrong input. A friendly neighbor, a church friend or a nearby relative who can stop by makes everything in this guide work better. Ask them, thank them, and put their number on the cheat-sheet.

CHAPTER 4

What to Set Up on Your Next Visit

Almost everything in this guide can be done from a distance, but a few things go much more smoothly in person — especially anything that needs your parent's passcode or a code sent to their phone. If you have a visit coming up, here's the plan, in order.

The visit checklist

1. **Make sure each device has a passcode** your parent can remember, and that they know it. Without it, almost nothing else can be set up.
2. **Save yourself in their contacts** with your full name and photo. Several tools in this guide, including iPhone remote control, only work with people saved in their contacts (Chapter 7).
3. **Try a practice screen share** while you're sitting together (Chapters 6 through 9). The first time is always the slowest; doing it in person takes the fear out of it.
4. **Turn on automatic updates** on every device (Chapter 19).
5. **Add each other as recovery contacts** on your Apple or Google accounts (Chapter 12).
6. **Set up a shared password vault** with the few logins you both agreed on (Chapter 11).
7. **Talk about a Legacy Contact** and where important papers are kept (Chapter 13).
8. **Fill in the cheat-sheet** in Chapter 24 and leave a printed copy by their phone or computer.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

One well-planned afternoon turns months of guessing into quick, confident fixes. Once these pieces are in place, most problems take a five-minute call instead of a weekend trip.

Can't visit? Do it in small pieces

If a visit isn't on the calendar, don't wait. Do one item per phone call, starting with a practice screen share. A short, successful call builds confidence; a two-hour marathon builds dread. Your parent will be far more willing to try the next thing if the last one went well.

TIP

Make the practice call fun

For the first screen share, don't fix anything. Have your parent show you their favorite photos, or the weather where they live. Once they've done it on a happy call, it won't feel scary on a stressful one.

GOOD TO KNOW

A local professional can do the hands-on part

If your parent lives in or near Portage County, Ohio, this checklist is exactly the kind of thing I do in a home visit, with you on speakerphone if you like. Elsewhere, a trusted local technician or your parent's library may offer similar help.

PART 2

Seeing Their Screen from Miles Away

Screen sharing lets you see exactly what your parent sees. Remote control lets you tap and click for them, with their okay. Here's how on every common device, and how to keep strangers out.

CHAPTER 5

Which Screen-Sharing Tool to Use

"What does the screen say?" is the question that eats up most long-distance help calls. Screen sharing ends that guessing game. Your parent's screen shows up on yours, live, while you talk.

Seeing versus controlling

- **Screen sharing** means you can *see* their screen. You talk them through it, and their hands do the tapping. This is the gentlest option and the best for teaching.
- **Remote control** means you can also *tap, click and type* on their device from yours. Faster for fixing things, and always something your parent has to approve each time.

Pick the tool by your parent's device

Your parent has…	Use this	Remote control?	Where in this guide
iPhone or iPad	FaceTime, or a regular Phone call between iPhones	Yes, if both of you have an iPhone or iPad with a recent update	Chapters 6 and 7
Windows PC	Quick Assist (built into Windows)	Yes, after they approve it	Chapter 8
Chromebook or any computer with Chrome	Chrome Remote Desktop	Yes	Chapter 9
Android phone	Google Meet or another video-call app's screen share	View only	Chapter 9
Mac	FaceTime screen sharing, or a video-call app	Varies	Chapter 9

GOOD TO KNOW

You don't need the same kind of device

Quick Assist, Chrome Remote Desktop and video-call apps work across brands, so a son with a Mac can help a mother with a Windows laptop. iPhone remote control is the exception: both of you need an iPhone or iPad.

Before every session

1. **Call first.** Talk on the phone (or FaceTime) so you can hear each other the whole time.
2. **Have your parent close anything private** they don't want you to see, like bank sites or email.
3. **Plug in their device**, so a low battery doesn't end the session halfway through.
4. **Agree on what you're fixing** today, and stick to it.
5. **End the session when you're done**, and tell them it's ended. Chapter 10 explains why that matters.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Problems that used to need a visit — a confusing pop-up, a setting that got switched off, an app that won't open — often take a few minutes when you can simply see the screen.

CHAPTER 6

iPhone & iPad: Sharing a Screen in a Call

If your parent has an iPhone or iPad, screen sharing is built right in. You can do it during a **FaceTime** call, and on recent iPhones you can also do it during an ordinary **Phone** call between two iPhones. There's nothing to download.

What you both need

- Screen sharing in FaceTime has been around since iOS 15. Remote control (Chapter 7) needs iOS 18 or later in FaceTime, and iOS 26 or later in a regular Phone call — on *both* iPhones.
- Each of you saved in the other's **Contacts**.
- A decent Wi-Fi or cellular connection on both ends.

How your parent shares their screen in FaceTime

These are the steps your parent follows on their iPhone, while you're on the call:

1. Start a **FaceTime** call with you (video or audio both work).
2. Tap the screen once to bring up the call controls.
3. Tap the **Share** button — a small rectangle with a person in front of it — and choose **Share My Screen**.
4. After a short countdown, their screen appears on your device. Now they can go to the Home Screen and open whatever app is giving them trouble.
5. To stop, they tap the same **Share** button again, or simply end the call.

> **TIP**
>
> **If the button names look a little different**
>
> Apple moves these controls slightly from one update to the next. If your parent can't find **Share My Screen**, have them tap the screen during the call and look for the button with the rectangle-and-person picture. That's the one.

Sharing during a regular Phone call

With iOS 26 or later on both iPhones, your parent doesn't even need FaceTime. During a normal phone call between your two iPhones, the call screen offers a way to share their screen and, in Chapter 7, to give you control. This is handy for a parent who never quite got comfortable with FaceTime.

What you'll see on your end

Their screen shows up in a window on yours. You can tap that window to make it bigger. Talk them through each step: "Now tap the gray gear, that's Settings. Good. Scroll down a little." Because you can see it, you'll know right away if they've tapped the wrong thing.

HEADS UP

Notifications may show up on screen

While your parent shares, anything that appears on their screen — a text from a neighbor, a calendar alert — can appear on yours too. Mention it before you start, and look away from anything private.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

You stop guessing which button they mean, and they stop trying to describe a screen in words. Most iPhone questions take minutes instead of an hour.

CHAPTER 7

iPhone & iPad: Taking the Wheel with Remote Control

Sometimes talking someone through ten taps is harder than just doing it. With remote control, you can tap and swipe on your parent's iPhone or iPad from your own — but only when they approve it, and only while the call lasts.

What has to be true

- **In FaceTime:** both of you need iOS 18 or iPadOS 18 or later.
- **In a regular Phone call:** both of you need iOS 26 or later, and it's a one-to-one call.
- You must be **saved in your parent's Contacts**. Their iPhone won't offer control to a number it doesn't know.
- Remote control isn't available in every country or region.

How to ask for control

1. Start the call and have your parent share their screen (Chapter 6).
2. On your iPhone, tap the window showing their screen.
3. Tap the **Remote Control** button (in FaceTime, it may say **Request Remote Control**).
4. Wait while your request appears on their screen.

What your parent does

1. A notification appears asking if you can control their screen.
2. If they're happy with it, they tap **Allow**. If not, they tap **Don't Allow**, and screen sharing simply carries on as before.

While you're in control

- You can tap, swipe and type on their screen from yours.
- **Your parent stays in charge.** If they tap or type at the same time, their touch wins over yours.
- Some things are blocked for safety. Face ID and Touch ID don't work during a remote session, so you can't use their face or fingerprint to approve purchases or unlock passwords.

- When either of you ends the call, remote control and screen sharing end too.

FROM BILL

Narrate as you go

Even when you're doing the tapping, say each step out loud: "I'm turning on Automatic Updates — see that green switch?" Your parent learns where things are, and they never feel like something is happening behind their back.

SCAM ALERT

Only for people your parent knows

This is exactly why Apple limits control to saved contacts. Tell your parent plainly: "Only ever tap Allow for me, or for someone you called yourself." A stranger who calls asking to see or control their screen is a scammer, every time. Chapter 10 has more.

CHAPTER 8

Windows PCs: Quick Assist

If your parent has a Windows computer, it already has a free tool called **Quick Assist**. You create a short code on your computer, they type it into theirs, and you can see — and with their okay, control — their screen.

What you both need

- Both computers running a current version of Windows (Quick Assist comes with Windows 11 and Windows 10).
- **You**, the helper, sign in with a **Microsoft account**. Your parent doesn't need to sign in to anything.
- A phone call running alongside, so you can talk.

Your side: get a code

1. On your Windows computer, click **Start**, type **Quick Assist**, and open it.
2. Under **Help someone**, click **Help someone**, and sign in with your Microsoft account if asked.
3. Quick Assist shows a short **security code**. Read it to your parent over the phone. The code only works for a short time, so don't wait.

Your parent's side: enter the code

1. Click **Start**, type **Quick Assist**, and open it.
2. Under **Get help**, type the code you read them into the **Security code from assistant** box, and click **Submit**.
3. Windows asks if they want to share their screen. They read your name, then click **Allow**.

Asking for control

Once you can see their screen, you can click **Request control**. Your parent gets a box asking whether to **Allow** or **Deny**. If they allow it, you can use your mouse and keyboard on their computer. Either of you can end the session at any time, and they can close Quick Assist to stop it instantly.

HEADS UP

Some prompts still need your parent

When Windows asks "Do you want to allow this app to make changes to your device?", that box may need your parent's click — or their computer password — even while you're in control. That's a safety feature. Have them ready at the keyboard.

TIP

Pin Quick Assist where they'll find it

On your next session, right-click Quick Assist on their Start menu and choose **Pin to taskbar**. Then "click the little Quick Assist button at the bottom" is all they'll need to remember.

SCAM ALERT

Microsoft will never call your parent

Scammers love Quick Assist because it's already on every Windows PC. Microsoft does not call people about computer problems, and real warnings never include a phone number to call. Your parent should only enter a Quick Assist code that **you** gave them, on a call that **they** placed to you.

CHAPTER 9

Chromebooks, Macs, Android & Everything Else

Not every family is all-Apple or all-Windows. Here are the dependable options for the other devices you're likely to meet.

Chromebooks (and any computer with Chrome): Chrome Remote Desktop

Chrome Remote Desktop is a free tool from Google that works in the Chrome browser on Chromebooks, Windows PCs and Macs. It works much like Quick Assist, but with the code going the other direction: your parent makes the code, and you type it in.

1. Your parent opens Chrome and goes to **remotedesktop.google.com/support**, signed in to their Google Account.
2. In the section for getting support, they click **Generate Code** and read you the numbers. (The first time, Chrome may ask them to download a small helper; it's from Google and it's safe to accept.)
3. You open the same page on your computer, type the code under **Give Support**, and click **Connect**.
4. Your parent sees your email address and clicks **Share** to let you in.
5. When you're done, either of you clicks **Stop Sharing**.

> GOOD TO KNOW
> **One code, one session**
> Each code works for a single session. Next time, your parent generates a new one. If a code doesn't work, the fix is simply to generate a fresh code.

Android phones: share the screen in a video call

Android phones don't have a built-in way for family to control them remotely, but your parent can show you their screen in a video call. Google Meet is free and comes on many Android phones:

1. Start a **Google Meet** call with you.
2. During the call, your parent taps **More** (three dots), then **Share screen**.

3. They choose **A single app** to show only one app, or the entire screen, and confirm.
4. When finished, they tap **Stop sharing**.

> TIP
> **"A single app" keeps the rest private**
> If your parent only needs help with one app, have them pick **A single app**. You'll see that app and nothing else — no texts or notifications from the rest of the phone.

Macs

On a Mac, the simplest route for most families is **FaceTime**: during a FaceTime call, your parent can share their Mac screen much as they would on an iPhone. Video-call apps your family already uses, such as Zoom or Google Meet, can share a Mac screen too, although the Mac will ask your parent to give that app permission the first time.

Zoom, Google Meet and other video-call apps

If your family already gets together on Zoom or Google Meet, those apps have a **Share** or **Share screen** button that works on computers, phones and tablets. They're excellent for showing, less so for fixing. Stick with Quick Assist, Chrome Remote Desktop or iPhone remote control when you need to take the controls.

> HEADS UP
> **About other remote-control apps**
> You'll see many paid remote-access programs advertised. Some are perfectly fine, but they're also the tools scammers most often ask victims to install. For family help, the built-in options in this part of the guide are free and enough. If your parent ever finds a remote-access app on their device that neither of you installed, call for help right away.

CHAPTER 10

Never Let a Stranger In

Every tool in this part of the guide has a dark twin: the tech-support scam. A caller, a pop-up or an email claims something is wrong with the computer, then talks your parent into sharing their screen or installing a remote-access program. Once in, the scammer "finds" a fake virus, demands payment, or goes looking for bank accounts.

SCAM ALERT

The one rule to teach your parent

Only share your screen or give control to someone you called yourself, at a number you already know. Never because of a pop-up, a phone call, a text or an email that came to you. Real companies — Microsoft, Apple, Google, the bank — don't call to say your computer has a problem.

The warning signs

- A **pop-up with a phone number** and a warning that the computer is infected or "locked". Real warnings never ask you to call a number.
- An **unexpected call** from "Microsoft", "Apple", "Amazon", "your bank" or "the government" about a problem.
- Anyone asking your parent to **download an app** so they can "take a look".
- Requests to pay with **gift cards, wire transfers, cryptocurrency** or a payment app.
- Pressure and urgency: "Don't hang up, don't tell anyone, this must be fixed now."

If a stranger already got in

1. **Hang up** and **disconnect the device from the internet**: turn off Wi-Fi, or unplug the computer's network cable.
2. If your parent paid anything, **call their bank or card company right away** using the number on the card, and ask to stop or reverse the payment.
3. From a *different, safe* device, **change the passwords** for their email and bank.
4. Have someone trustworthy **check the computer** for programs the scammer may have left behind.
5. **Report it** at **ReportFraud.ftc.gov**.

FROM BILL

No shame, only speed

These scammers are professionals, and they fool smart, careful people. If it happens, the most important thing is that your parent tells someone quickly. Make sure they know you'll never be angry — you'll just help. That promise does more to protect them than any software.

Make it routine to end every session

When you finish helping, say "I've ended the session now," and have your parent check that the screen-sharing window is gone. That habit makes it obvious if something is ever still connected when it shouldn't be.

PART 3

Passwords & Getting Back In

How to share the logins you both agree on without sticky notes, how to make sure your parent can always get back into their accounts, and how to plan for the day you may need them.

CHAPTER 11

Sharing Passwords the Safe Way

Sooner or later you'll need a password to help: the streaming service on their TV, the pharmacy website, the Wi-Fi. A notebook by the computer works until it's lost, or until a visitor reads it. Today's password managers let you share *just the logins you both choose*, and they update automatically when either of you changes a password.

GOOD TO KNOW

Share a few, not all

You don't need your parent's every password. Agree on a short list together — maybe the Wi-Fi, the streaming services, the pharmacy and the utility bills. Banking is a personal choice; many families use a trusted contact (Chapter 20) instead of sharing a bank login.

If you both use Apple devices: a Shared Group in Passwords

Apple's free **Passwords** app lets you create a shared group of passwords. Everyone in the group can see and use them on their iPhone, iPad or Mac, and changes sync to all of you.

What you need

- Everyone on iOS 18, iPadOS 18 or macOS Sequoia or later.
- Each person saved in the other's Contacts.

To create a group (on the iPhone of whoever owns the passwords)

1. Open the **Passwords** app.
2. Tap the **+** button and choose **New Shared Group**.
3. Give the group a name, such as "Mom & Family", then tap **Add People** and pick the people from Contacts.
4. Tap **Create**.
5. Choose the passwords to share and tap **Move**.

To join (on your iPhone)

The next time you open Passwords, you'll be asked to accept or decline the invitation. Accept, and the shared passwords appear in their own group.

- Only the person who created the group can add or remove people, rename it or delete it.
- Each password can be in only one shared group at a time.

- Anyone can leave a group whenever they like, and the passwords they shared leave with them.

HEADS UP

Accept invitations only from people you know

Apple's own advice is to decline a Shared Group invitation from anyone you don't know or trust. Teach your parent the same rule.

If your parent uses Android or Chrome: Google Password Manager

Google Password Manager can share a saved password with someone in your parent's **Google family group** (Chapter 15). The family member gets their own copy of the login in their Google Password Manager.

1. Make sure you're both in the same Google family group.
2. In Google Password Manager, your parent opens the saved password they want to share.
3. They tap **Share**, choose your name, and tap **Share** again.

GOOD TO KNOW

Shared once, not synced

With Google, the family member receives a copy. If your parent later changes that password, share it again so your copy is current.

Mixed families: a paid family password manager

If one of you has an iPhone and the other has Android or Windows, a cross-platform manager may be easier. Two widely used ones offer family plans with shared vaults:

Service	Family plan	Approximate price (November 2026)
1Password Families	Up to 5 people, shared and private vaults	About $72 a year
Bitwarden Families	Up to 6 people, shared collections	About $48 a year

Prices change, so check each company's own website before you buy. Either one is a good choice; the best password manager is the one your parent will actually use.

TIP

There's more on this in our password guide

Our Passwords & Password Managers guide covers choosing and setting up a manager in depth. This chapter is just the family-sharing piece.

CHAPTER 12

Recovery Contacts: A Way Back In

One of the most stressful calls you can get is "I'm locked out." A forgotten Apple Account password, a new phone that won't accept the old one, a Google sign-in that wants a code sent to a number that's been disconnected. Setting up recovery options now — while everything works — means a locked door has a spare key.

Apple: add a Recovery Contact

A Recovery Contact is someone you trust who can give your parent a code to get back into their Apple Account. The contact **can't** see your parent's data or sign in as them — they can only hand over the code.

What you need

- Two-factor authentication turned on for your parent's Apple Account.
- Both of you with iMessage turned on and a passcode on your iPhone.
- Devices on iOS 15 or later.

On your parent's iPhone

1. Open **Settings** and tap **their name** at the top.
2. Tap **Sign-In & Security**, then **Recovery Contacts**.
3. Tap **Add Recovery Contact** and confirm with Face ID or the passcode.
4. Choose you from the list (family members appear first), and follow the prompts to send the invitation.
5. On your iPhone, accept the invitation in Messages. It's not active until you do.

> **TIP**
>
> **Make it mutual**
>
> While you're there, add your parent as *your* Recovery Contact too. It makes the whole thing feel like a family safety net rather than supervision.

If your parent ever gets locked out

On the sign-in screen, they follow the prompts to recover their account and choose to get help from a Recovery Contact. You'll then open **Settings** > **your name** > **Sign-In & Security** > **Recovery Contacts** on your iPhone, tap their name, and get a code to read to them. Only give that code to your parent, and only over a call or in person where you know it's really them.

SCAM ALERT

A Recovery Contact code is like a house key

If anyone ever asks you for a recovery code by text or email — even if it seems to be from your parent — call your parent at their usual number first. Scammers impersonate family members to get exactly these codes.

Google: recovery phone and recovery email

Google doesn't have Recovery Contacts in the same way. Instead, make sure your parent's Google Account has a current **recovery phone number** and **recovery email**.

1. On their phone or computer, go to **myaccount.google.com** and sign in.
2. Choose **Personal info**, then look under **Contact info**.
3. Under **Phone**, add or check their own mobile number — one that gets texts and that they carry.
4. Under **Email**, add a **recovery email** that's different from their Gmail address. Many families use the adult child's email here, with the parent's agreement.

GOOD TO KNOW

Changes can take time

Google notes that some recovery changes can take up to a week to take effect, so set these up long before you need them.

Other accounts

Email providers like Outlook and Yahoo, and most banks, also have recovery phone and email settings, usually under **Security** or **Account settings**. Check that the phone number on file is current. An old landline number that's been disconnected is one of the most common reasons people get locked out for good.

HEADS UP

About Apple's Recovery Key

Apple also offers a Recovery Key — a long code that replaces the normal recovery process. It's very secure, but if the key is lost and your parent can't sign in, Apple may not be able to help at all. For most families, Recovery Contacts are the safer choice. Don't turn on a Recovery Key without understanding that trade-off.

CHAPTER 13

Planning for the Hard Day: Legacy Contacts

This is a gentle subject, but an important one. When someone dies, their photos, messages and documents can be locked away behind a password nobody knows. A few minutes of setup now can spare your family a great deal of heartache later.

Recovery Contact versus Legacy Contact

Who	What they can do
Recovery Contact	Helps your parent get back into their **own** account while they're living. Sees nothing.
Legacy Contact	Can request access to your parent's Apple account data **after their death**, using an access key and a death certificate.

Apple: add a Legacy Contact

1. On your parent's iPhone, open **Settings** and tap **their name**.
2. Tap **Sign-In & Security**, then **Legacy Contact**.
3. Tap **Add Legacy Contact** and confirm with Face ID, Touch ID or the passcode.
4. Choose the person. If they have an Apple device, they'll be sent the **access key** by iMessage and their device stores it when they accept.
5. If they don't have an Apple device, choose to print or share a copy of the access key, and keep it with your parent's important papers.

> GOOD TO KNOW
>
> **What a Legacy Contact will need**
>
> After a death, the Legacy Contact needs **both** the access key and a death certificate to request access from Apple. Legacy Contact setup needs iOS 15.2 or later.

Google and other accounts

Google has its own tool, the **Inactive Account Manager**, and password managers like 1Password and Bitwarden offer emergency-access features. Our companion guide, *Digital Legacy: Accounts & Photos After a Death*, walks through each of these, and what to do with accounts after a loss.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

It's one of the kindest things a parent can do for their family: making sure the photos of grandchildren, the voicemails and the letters aren't lost to a forgotten password. Many parents feel relieved once it's done.

FROM BILL

Bring it up gently

If it feels awkward, start with yourself: "I just set up a Legacy Contact on my phone — would you want one too?" It's easier to say yes to something your child has already done.

PART 4

Family Features

Apple and Google both let a family share purchases, storage and more. Here's how to bring a parent into your family group, and how to share locations only with consent.

CHAPTER 14

Apple Family Sharing for a Parent

Family Sharing isn't just for kids. Adding a parent to your Apple family group lets you share an iCloud storage plan, apps, Apple TV and Apple Music subscriptions, and location if you both want to. It also makes your parent easy to pick when you set up recovery and sharing features.

What your parent gets

- **Shared iCloud storage** — if you pay for a larger iCloud+ plan, your parent can use part of it, so their photos keep backing up and the "storage full" warnings stop.
- **Shared subscriptions** like Apple TV and Apple Music, if you have them.
- **Shared purchases** — apps and books you've bought, if you turn on purchase sharing.
- **An easy way to share locations** with each other in Find My (Chapter 16).

GOOD TO KNOW

Their data stays theirs

Joining a family group does not let you read your parent's messages, see their photos or get into their account. Each person keeps their own Apple Account. Even with shared storage, you can't see each other's files.

How to invite your parent

The organizer — usually you — does this on their own iPhone:

1. Open **Settings**. Tap **Family** near the top (on some versions, tap **your name** first, then **Family**).
2. Tap the **Add Member** button (a person with a plus sign).
3. Tap **Invite Others**.
4. Send the invitation by Messages or email, or choose to invite in person if your parent is sitting next to you.
5. On their iPhone, your parent opens the invitation and taps to accept.

- A family group has one organizer and up to five other members.
- A person can belong to only one family group at a time. If your parent is already in a group (perhaps with your brother), they'll need to leave it before joining yours.

Sharing your iCloud storage

If you already pay for iCloud+ with 200 GB or more, you can share it. In **Settings** > **Family**, look for **Subscriptions** or **iCloud+** and choose to share it with the family. Your parent's devices will then use the shared plan instead of their own small free amount.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

The "iCloud storage is full" message is one of the most common worries older iPhone owners call about. Sharing your plan makes it go away, keeps their photos safely backed up, and often costs less than a separate plan for each of you.

HEADS UP

Shared purchases mean shared payment

If purchase sharing is on, things your parent buys may be charged to the organizer's card. Talk about it first, and consider turning purchase sharing off if that makes anyone uncomfortable.

CHAPTER 15

A Google Family Group

Google has its own version: a **family group**. It lets you share Google One storage, YouTube Premium or YouTube TV family plans, Google Play purchases and — as Chapter 11 showed — saved passwords.

Create the group and invite your parent

1. On your phone or computer, go to **g.co/yourfamily** and sign in to your Google Account.
2. Choose to **create a family group** and follow the prompts. You become the family manager.
3. Invite your parent using their Gmail address.
4. Your parent opens the invitation email (or the notification on their phone) and accepts.

- The family manager can invite up to five people.
- To create a group, you must be 18 or older.
- Some services have extra rules — for example, YouTube TV family members must live in the same household — so a parent across the country may not qualify for every shared plan.

Sharing Google One storage

If you pay for a Google One storage plan, you can share it with up to five family members from the Google One settings. Like Apple, sharing storage doesn't let anyone see anyone else's files, photos or email.

GOOD TO KNOW

One family group per person

Just like Apple, your parent can only be in one Google family group. If siblings each want to help, agree on whose group your parent joins.

CHAPTER 16

Location Sharing — With Consent

Knowing where your parent is can be a real comfort: you can see they made it home from the doctor, or help them if they're lost. But location is personal. This is a feature to set up **together**, openly, and never secretly.

> **STAY SAFE**
>
> **Never track someone without their knowledge**
>
> Turning on location sharing on someone else's phone without their agreement damages trust and can cross legal lines. Every method in this chapter shows your parent clearly that they're sharing, and lets them stop at any time. That's how it should be.

iPhone: Find My

Your parent can share their location from the **Find My** app (or from Messages) for an hour, until the end of the day, or indefinitely.

1. On your parent's iPhone, open **Find My** and tap the **People** tab.
2. Tap the **+** button and choose **Share My Location**.
3. Choose you from their contacts and tap **Send**.
4. Pick how long: **Share for One Hour**, **Until End of Day**, or **Share Indefinitely**.
5. You'll get a notification and can share yours back.

How your parent stops sharing

- To stop with one person: in Find My, tap **People**, tap that person, and choose **Stop Sharing My Location**. The other person isn't sent a notification.
- To pause for everyone: tap the **Me** tab and turn off **Share My Location**.
- Deleting the Find My app does **not** stop sharing. Use the steps above instead.

Android and iPhone: Google Maps

Google Maps location sharing works on both Android and iPhone:

1. In **Google Maps**, your parent taps their **profile picture**, then **Location sharing**.
2. They tap **Share location** (or **New share**).
3. Under the time choice, they pick a length of time or **Until you turn this off**.

4. They choose you (using your Gmail address) and tap **Share**.

GOOD TO KNOW

Links last 24 hours at most

If your parent shares a *link* instead of sharing directly with your Google Account, the link stops working after 24 hours at the most, even if they chose "until you turn this off." Sharing directly to your Gmail address is what keeps it on.

Location sharing and battery

Sharing your location uses a little extra battery, but on a recent phone most people never notice. If your parent's phone is struggling to last the day, the battery is usually the problem, not the sharing.

TIP

Agree on what you'll do with it

Settle the ground rules out loud: "I'll only look if you're late and I can't reach you." Families who agree on that tend to keep sharing turned on, because nobody feels watched.

GOOD TO KNOW

Want more than location?

Our companion guide, *Life360 & Family Location Sharing*, compares Life360 and the built-in options in more detail. For fall detection and emergency buttons, see our *Medical Alert & Fall Detection* guide.

PART 5

Making Their Days Simpler

Simpler home screens, shared calendars, medication reminders and automatic updates: small changes that prevent many of the problems you'd otherwise be fixing from afar.

CHAPTER 17

Simpler Phones: Assistive Access & Easy Mode

If your parent finds their phone overwhelming — too many icons, too many ways to tap the wrong thing — both iPhone and Samsung Galaxy phones have a simpler mode built in. Set up thoughtfully, it can turn a frustrating gadget into one they enjoy.

iPhone and iPad: Assistive Access

Assistive Access replaces the regular iPhone layout with large buttons for just the apps you pick — for example, Calls, Messages, Camera and Photos — with big text and fewer choices on each screen. It was designed for people with cognitive disabilities, and many families find it helpful for a parent who is easily confused by the standard screen.

Before you start

- The iPhone must already be set up, and signed in with **your parent's** Apple Account.
- You'll create an **Assistive Access passcode**, used to enter and leave Assistive Access and change its settings. Write it on the cheat-sheet.
- You can add a **recovery Apple Account** (yours) that can reset that passcode if it's forgotten. Without one, a forgotten Assistive Access passcode can mean erasing the iPhone. Set it up.

To set it up

1. On your parent's iPhone, go to **Settings** > **Accessibility** > **Assistive Access**.
2. Tap **Set Up Assistive Access**, then **Continue**.
3. Follow the prompts to choose the look (rows of large buttons or a grid), the apps to include, and what each app can do — for example, who your parent can call.
4. Set the Assistive Access passcode and the recovery Apple Account when asked.
5. When you're ready, start Assistive Access.

To leave Assistive Access

Triple-click the side button (on iPhones with Face ID) or the Home button (on other models), then enter the Assistive Access passcode. The same triple-click gets you into its settings.

FROM BILL

Do this one in person if you can

Assistive Access changes how the whole phone looks and works. It's best set up sitting beside your parent, trying each app together, and adjusting until it feels right. Ask them which apps they really use — and don't remove the ones they love.

Samsung Galaxy: Easy mode

Samsung's **Easy mode** is lighter-touch: it keeps the normal phone but makes icons and text larger, simplifies the Home screen, and uses a high-contrast keyboard.

1. Open **Settings** and tap **Display**.
2. Tap **Easy mode**.
3. Turn on the switch.

To go back, return to **Settings** > **Display** > **Easy mode** and turn it off. If you can't find Easy mode, some models put larger-display options under **Settings** > **Accessibility** > **Visibility enhancements** instead.

Small changes that help on any phone

- **Bigger text** in the display settings. Every phone has it.
- **Favorites** in the Phone app for the five people they call most, with photos.
- **Remove apps they never use** from the Home Screen (with their agreement).
- **Silence unknown callers** or turn on the carrier's spam blocking, to cut down on scam calls.

GOOD TO KNOW

If even a simpler smartphone is too much

Our *Simple Phones for Seniors* guide compares phones designed to be easy from the start, including options that family can manage remotely.

CHAPTER 18

Shared Calendars & Medication Reminders

"When is Mom's eye appointment?" "Did Dad take his evening pills?" A shared calendar and the phone's own medication reminders can answer those questions without a single nagging phone call.

A shared family calendar on iPhone

You can create one iCloud calendar for your parent's appointments and share it, so the whole family sees the same dates and anyone you allow can add to it.

1. On your iPhone, open **Calendar** and tap **Calendars** at the bottom.
2. Tap **Add Calendar**, name it (for example "Mom's Appointments"), and make sure it's an **iCloud** calendar.
3. Tap the **info** button (the small i) next to the new calendar.
4. Tap **Add Person**, choose your parent and anyone else who should see it, and tap **Add**.
5. Tap a person's name to turn **Allow Editing** on or off.

Each person gets an invitation to accept. Only iCloud calendars can be shared this way, and each person you add needs an email address in Contacts.

TIP

Google Calendar works too

If your family uses Google, the same idea works in Google Calendar: create a calendar for your parent's appointments, then share it with family members from the calendar's settings on a computer.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

When an appointment is on the shared calendar, everyone knows about it. You can arrange a ride, call afterward to ask how it went, and nobody has to remember to pass the news along.

Medication reminders on iPhone

The free **Health** app can remind your parent to take each medication and let them mark it **Taken** or **Skipped**. If a scheduled dose isn't logged, it sends a follow-up reminder.

1. On your parent's iPhone, open **Health** and tap **Browse** (or search) to find **Medications**.
2. Tap **Add a Medication**. Type the name — or pick it from the list — and follow the prompts for the form, strength and schedule.
3. When a reminder pops up, your parent taps it and chooses **Taken** or **Skipped**. There's also a **Log All as Taken** option for several pills at once.

GOOD TO KNOW

Reminders follow the schedule

Health sends reminders only for medications that have a schedule. If a dose isn't logged, a follow-up reminder can arrive about 30 minutes later. An Apple Watch can log doses too.

STAY SAFE

A reminder isn't a medical device

Phone reminders help, but they don't replace a pharmacist's advice, a pill organizer, or a caregiver for someone whose memory is changing. Always type medications exactly as written on the label, and keep the list up to date when a doctor changes something.

On Android

Android phones don't have a single built-in medication tracker that works the same on every brand. A repeating alarm in the **Clock** app, with a label such as "Evening pills — blue bottle", is a simple and reliable start. Many pharmacies also offer free refill reminders in their own apps.

CHAPTER 19

Keeping Their Devices Up to Date

Updates fix security holes that scammers and hackers use. An out-of-date phone or computer is one of the easiest ways for trouble to get in. The good news: you can set almost every device to update itself, so nobody has to remember.

iPhone and iPad

1. Open **Settings** > **General** > **Software Update**.
2. Tap **Automatic Updates**.
3. Turn on **iOS Updates** under both **Automatically Download** and **Automatically Install** (the exact wording varies a little by version).

Updates then install overnight while the iPhone is charging, connected to Wi-Fi and locked. Remind your parent to plug in their phone at bedtime.

Windows

1. Open **Settings** > **Windows Update**.
2. Click **Check for updates** and install anything waiting.
3. Windows installs important updates automatically, but it often needs a **restart** to finish. If your parent never turns the computer off, the update can sit unfinished for weeks.

> TIP
>
> **Restart once a week**
>
> Ask your parent to restart the computer every Sunday, or whenever you have your weekly call. It finishes waiting updates and clears up a surprising number of small problems.

Android phones

The menu depends on the brand. On Samsung Galaxy phones it's **Settings** > **Software update**. On Google Pixel phones it's **Settings** > **System** > **Software updates**. Check for an update, install it, and turn on automatic downloading over Wi-Fi if it's offered. Apps update themselves through the Google Play Store.

Chromebooks

Chromebooks download updates on their own. When one is ready, a small up-arrow or a restart prompt appears near the clock. Restarting installs it in under a minute.

Know when a device is too old

Every phone, tablet and computer eventually stops getting security updates. When that happens, it isn't safe for banking or email anymore, even if it still turns on. If your parent's device can't install current updates, it's time to plan a replacement.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Automatic updates are one of the simplest protections you can give a parent from afar. Set them once, and their devices quietly stay patched against the latest threats.

HEADS UP

Updates never arrive by phone call

A real update shows up in the device's Settings, never in a phone call, a text or a pop-up asking you to download something from a website. Teach your parent to check Settings, not links.

PART 6

Money Guardrails

A trusted contact at the bank, alerts that catch problems early, and a credit freeze that stops identity thieves cold — all without taking over your parent's finances.

CHAPTER 20

A Trusted Contact at the Bank & Brokerage

A **trusted contact** is someone your parent names so their financial firm has a person to call if something looks wrong — a sudden large withdrawal, a confused phone call, or a customer they can't reach. It's one of the simplest protections against financial exploitation, and it gives you no power over the account.

What a trusted contact can and can't do

A trusted contact…	
Can	Be contacted by the firm about possible fraud or exploitation, to confirm your parent's contact details or health, or to learn if a legal guardian has been named.
Can't	Make trades, move money, or act on the account. A trusted contact is not a co-owner and not a power of attorney.

At brokerage and investment accounts

Under FINRA Rule 4512, brokerage firms must make a reasonable effort to ask customers for a trusted contact person. The trusted contact must be 18 or older. It's optional: your parent can decline, and the account stays open.

If the firm suspects exploitation, FINRA rules also allow it to place a temporary hold on a payout. When a trusted contact is on file, the firm must try to let that person know about the hold.

How to add one

1. Your parent logs in to their brokerage or retirement account, or calls the number on their statement.
2. They ask to **add a trusted contact person** (some firms call it an emergency contact). Online, it's usually under profile or account settings.
3. They give your name, phone, email and mailing address.

At the bank

Banks aren't covered by the same FINRA rule, but many now let customers name a trusted contact or emergency contact for the same purpose. Have your parent ask at their branch or on the phone: "Do you have a trusted contact form?"

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

If a scammer ever talks your parent into draining an account, the bank or brokerage has someone to call before the money is gone. Many families never need it — and are very glad it was there when they did.

GOOD TO KNOW

For more authority, see a lawyer

If your parent wants you to be able to act on their accounts, that takes legal paperwork such as a durable power of attorney, or adding you as an authorized user or joint owner. Each has trade-offs. An elder-law attorney can explain the choices.

CHAPTER 21

Alerts, Auto-Pay & a Second Set of Eyes

Most money problems — a missed bill, a fraudulent charge, a scam in progress — are much smaller if someone notices quickly. Banks and card companies have free tools that do the noticing for you.

Turn on account alerts

In your parent's banking app or website (usually under **Alerts**, **Notifications** or **Settings**), turn on alerts for:

- **Any withdrawal or purchase over a set amount** — say $200.
- **Low balance**.
- **Changes to the account** — a new address, phone number, email or password.
- **New payees** or transfers to someone new.
- **International or online purchases** on cards.

Alerts can go to your parent's phone by text or email. Some banks also let a second person receive alerts or have view-only access; ask the bank what it offers.

TIP

Agree on who watches

If your parent agrees, you can review statements together once a month on a screen-sharing call (Part 2). Ten minutes of looking together catches most problems early, and they stay in charge of their own money.

Auto-pay for the bills that matter

Setting the electric, gas, water, phone and insurance bills to pay automatically means nothing gets shut off because a paper bill got lost in a pile. Your parent sets it up with each company or through their bank's bill pay. Keep an eye on the amounts: auto-pay is convenient, but it pays whatever is billed, so a monthly glance at statements is still wise.

GOOD TO KNOW

There's more on this in our bill-pay guide

Our *Online Bill Pay & Autopay* guide walks through setting up automatic payments safely, step by step.

Watch for the red flags

- Gift-card purchases, wire transfers or cryptocurrency ATM visits your parent can't explain.
- A new "friend" or romantic interest online who needs money.
- Calls from the "bank" or "government" asking to move money to keep it safe.
- Secretiveness about money that's new for them.

SCAM ALERT

"Move your money to keep it safe" is always a scam

No real bank, government agency or police department will ever ask your parent to withdraw cash, buy gold or gift cards, or move money to a "safe" account. If your parent mentions anything like this, stop the conversation and call their bank together at the number on their card.

CHAPTER 22

Credit Freezes & Fraud Alerts

A **credit freeze** stops anyone — including an identity thief — from opening new credit in your parent's name. It's free, it doesn't affect their credit score, and it doesn't touch their existing cards or accounts. For an older adult who isn't planning to borrow, it's one of the most effective protections available.

Credit freeze

- **Free** by federal law.
- Must be placed **at each of the three bureaus**: Equifax, Experian and TransUnion.
- Lasts **until your parent lifts it**. They can lift it temporarily if they ever need to apply for credit.

To place a freeze

1. With your parent, go to each bureau's official website — **equifax.com**, **experian.com** and **transunion.com** — and look for the credit freeze page. Or call each one.
2. Create an account for your parent and follow the steps to freeze.
3. Save the login (in the shared password vault from Chapter 11, if you both agree) so the freeze can be lifted later.

Fraud alert

A **fraud alert** is lighter than a freeze. It tells lenders to take extra steps to confirm it's really your parent before opening credit.

- Free, and lasts **one year**.
- Contact **any one** of the three bureaus; that bureau must tell the other two.
- After identity theft, an **extended fraud alert** lasts seven years.
- Your parent can have both a freeze and a fraud alert at once.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

What this does for you

Many identity-theft disasters start with a new credit card or loan opened in someone else's name. A freeze closes that door, permanently and for free, in about half an hour.

SCAM ALERT

Use only the official bureau sites

Type the bureau addresses yourself. Search ads and emails sometimes lead to look-alike sites that charge fees for "freeze services" you can do free. Identity-theft reporting goes to **IdentityTheft.gov**, the FTC's official site.

GOOD TO KNOW

There's more in our identity-protection guides

Our *Protecting an Aging Parent* guide covers the scams themselves, warning signs and what to do if money has already been lost.

PART 7

When to Call Bill & Your Cheat-Sheet

An honest word about when a hand is worth it, and a one-page summary for both of you to keep.

CHAPTER 23

When to Call Bill

I've written this guide so families can handle most long-distance help on their own. But part of being helpful is being honest about when a hand saves time, worry or money. Here's my straight advice, with no pressure.

Times it's well worth a call

- **The first setup** — the visit checklist in Chapter 4, when you can't be there in person. I can do the hands-on part at your parent's home while you join by speakerphone or video.
- **Remote help when you're the one who's stuck**. With your parent's permission, I can connect to their computer or walk them through their phone, and explain what I'm doing as I go.
- **After a scare** — a pop-up, a strange call, or a stranger who got into the computer (Chapter 10). I'll check what was changed and help lock things down.
- **Recovery and legacy setup** across Apple, Google, email and a password manager, so it's done right and written down.
- **Simplifying a phone** with Assistive Access or Easy mode, tuned to how your parent actually uses it.
- **You'd simply rather have a patient person handle it**. That's always a good enough reason.

What working with me is like

I work at your parent's pace — no rushing, no talking down, no jargon. I explain what I'm doing in plain words, and I ask before I touch anything personal. I'll always tell you honestly when something isn't worth the money. Home visits are here in Portage County, Ohio; remote help reaches families wherever they live. I've been doing this work for more than 30 years.

FROM BILL

How to reach me

Call **(330) 200-8042**, or book a time at **billshometech.com/book**. My help is **$49 remote · $99 in your home**. This guide is free to read and share; just tell me you're calling about a parent and I'll make sure we include you on the call.

GOOD TO KNOW

You may be greeted by Sophie

When you call or visit billshometech.com, you might first meet **Sophie**, my AI receptionist. She can answer quick questions and help you book a time. The actual help always comes from me.

Thank you for looking out for someone you love. A little patience and the right tools go a long way, and you don't have to do it all alone.

— Bill

CHAPTER 24

Your Long-Distance Cheat-Sheet

Print this page and keep a copy by your parent's phone or computer, and one for yourself. The whole guide, boiled down.

Seeing their screen

Device	What to do
iPhone or iPad	FaceTime or Phone call > tap the screen > Share > **Share My Screen**. Helper taps their screen > **Remote Control**; parent taps **Allow**.
Windows PC	Helper: Start > **Quick Assist** > Help someone > read the code. Parent: Quick Assist > type code > Submit > Allow.
Chromebook / Chrome	Parent: **remotedesktop.google.com/support** > Generate Code. Helper: Give Support > enter code > Connect.
Android phone	Google Meet call > More > **Share screen** > A single app.

Write it down once

Keep handy	
Tech lead & backup	_____
Local helper (name & phone)	_____
Parent's devices & models	_____
Main email account	_____
Apple or Google Recovery Contact	_____
Legacy Contact & where the access key is	_____
Assistive Access passcode kept by	_____
Trusted contact at bank / brokerage	_____
Credit freezes placed (date)	Equifax _____ Experian _____ TransUnion _____

When something's wrong, in order

1. A pop-up or call says the computer is infected: **don't call any number**. Close it or hang up, and call family.
2. A stranger got onto the device: **turn off Wi-Fi**, call the bank at the number on the card, change passwords from another device (Chapter 10).
3. Locked out of an account: use the **Recovery Contact** or recovery phone and email (Chapter 12).
4. Something just isn't working: **restart** the device, then try a screen share.
5. Still stuck: call Bill at **(330) 200-8042**.

The golden rules for your parent

- Only share your screen with someone **you called**, at a number you already know.
- Never read a code from a text to anyone who calls you.
- Nobody legitimate asks for **gift cards**, wire transfers or crypto.
- When in doubt, hang up and call family. Nobody will ever be upset with you for checking.