

Talking with *an Older Adult* about *Seeking Help*

If you feel the older adults in your life are not as healthy, happy, or safe as they should be, it's time to sit down with them to discuss your concerns. Issues related to aging are not easy. Many older adults are reluctant to talk about their declining health, limited physical functioning, and increased dependence on others, especially when they know their choices involve asking for help from loved ones and revealing private financial information.

Suggestions for Beginning the Discussion

- It's ***never too soon*** to begin planning. It's always best to do it while your loved ones can participate in making the decisions that affect them.
- Always keep in mind that they are adults, not children. They ***have earned their way in life*** and deserve to make decisions for themselves as long as they are mentally capable of doing that. Respect their position as your elders and try not to "think for them." Accept the fact that you may not agree with their decisions.
- Ask ***open-ended questions***. Phrase your concerns as questions to allow your loved ones to express their concerns and preferences. And start by learning about the plans they have already made.
- Set an ***agenda for the discussion***. Establish several issues that need to be talked about, such as finances, housing, health care, home care, household chores, meals, etc.
- ***Don't avoid negative issues***. It won't benefit anyone to gloss over the issues of financial resources or a worsening medical condition.
- ***Be supportive***. Remind your loved ones that your goal is for them to get the best care possible and that you want to honor their preferences.
- ***Accept your loved ones' feelings*** and preferences and make a sincere attempt to address them.
- Be ***patient***. Don't be disappointed if decisions aren't made in the first discussion.
- Seek guidance. ***Consult*** with a doctor, accountant, lawyer, clergy, or other adviser before taking any medical, financial, or legal steps.

If your loved ones want to explore home care, we support that decision. We know that 89% of all older adults want to remain in their own homes. Unlike the "all-or-nothing" choice of selling a house and moving to a long-term care facility, home care is flexible in the number of hours and the time of day that service is needed. It certainly is an option worth exploring.

Call us to schedule a consultation — preferably in your loved ones' home and with their full knowledge. They may not be receptive at first, but we can show how our caregivers can help them stay where they want to be — ***at home***.