



Have a Plan

Some suggested methods to deal with resistance are:

- If your loved one's health and/or safety are at issue, say so, and push the discussion forward.
- Involve others, such as clergy, physicians, or a geriatric care manager.
- Use community resources to help everyone ease into the "care at home" process. Meals on Wheels would be an example or a free consultation with a home care agency.

Make sure you have focused on what they feel are **their** issues, not just what others think are the concerns. They will be much more accepting of your concerns and wishes if they tie into their own concerns. One last thought on family meetings before moving on: It is often wise to have the family meet prior to having the loved one attend a family meeting. This will give the family an opportunity to unite in their thoughts, which will help to show your loved one that all of you are concerned about similar issues. The statement "strength in numbers" certainly does apply here.

After having the initial family meeting (with your loved one), and everyone has had the opportunity to express their feelings and thoughts, gently suggest that they make an appointment with their physician to have a thorough evaluation,

or a geriatric psychologist (depending on your loved one's condition). This professional evaluation can go a long way in helping them decide that they could use some assistance in their home. Don't nag them about this evaluation – simply plant the seed and water it from time to time. Eventually, most elders realize that they cannot care for themselves as they used to. Seeing a doctor seems to make this decision easier.

Finally, be direct and speak with them about having a home care agency come out and meet with them. This will allow your loved one to get a sense of exactly what such an agency can do for them. Focus this meeting on what a caregiver from an agency can do for them – be specific about the tasks a caregiver will perform, and won't perform. Let them know that they are still in control, and that the home care process can add significantly to everyone's peace of mind.

Keep all your discussions with them positive. Treat them as an equal – don't parent! And remember; let your loved one make their own decisions. Your job is to help them make those decisions, not to make decisions for them.

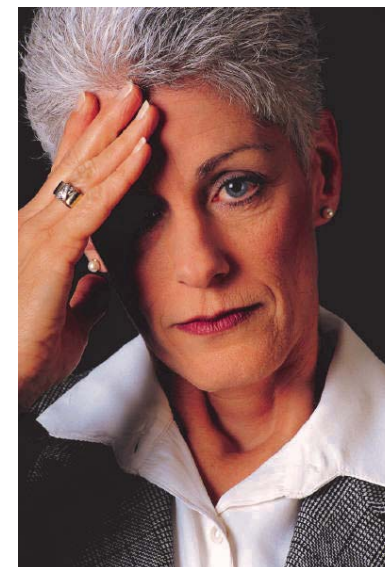
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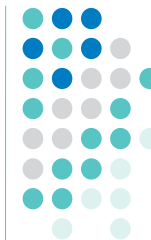
Discussing Home Care With Your Loved One



A guide for family, friends and loved ones

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Getting Your Elder Parents to Choose Home Care

Approaching That Difficult Subject . . . Your Loved One May Need Home Care.

The Family Plan

How do you help your elderly loved one get past their family customs and cultural beliefs to accept assistance in her home? How do you tell your loved one that you and your siblings are concerned about living alone at home? How do you help them keep their independence without interfering in their life or making decisions for them? These are issues that will not go away with time. To the contrary, it will behoove everyone involved to be proactive about such difficult topics. With advance planning and straight-forward discussions, the problem-solving process actually can work well, but it will take some concentrated effort by you, your siblings, and your loved one.

The first thing to know is that many of the conversations you will be having on your loved one's behalf could very well be emotionally laden, and must be handled carefully.



Some examples of issues to consider when involving yourself and your family in conversations that are to be focused on helping your loved one decide to use or not use home care are:

- Your loved one must be the focus of all discussions and be totally involved (assuming their mental capabilities are up to the task).
- Voice your opinions using “I” statements.
- Have a clear topic for every discussion.
- Be assertive about your thoughts.
- Be respectful of others opinions (especially your loved one's).
- Realize it may take some time and several conversations to come to a consensus.
- Don't blame others or use “You” statements.
- Don't try to accomplish too much in one conversation.
- And, don't expect that this will be easy.



Setting up a family meeting can be a great place to begin have discussions about the care they should be receiving (or wants to receive). It may seem obvious, but remember that they are the one who will be making choices about their own life, not you or one of your relatives (unless of course, there is a very serious health concern and your loved one is being quite unreasonable and disregarding this health concern). Your loved one should always be a central part of every discussion – if not, it could be difficult for you to find solutions that are acceptable to your loved one. Family meetings should be supportive and this support alone may be enough to convince them that they should begin to consider some form of home care before their health deteriorates.

Even with the most thought out and well planned family meeting, resistance is normal from them (and possibly from others) when discussing your loved one's independence, or lack of independence. If they show signs of resistance and would like to put this meeting off for awhile, don't push them into having the meeting. Realize they may need some time to prepare for such a discussion – approach them in a week or two and suggest another time to have the meeting. If they continue to be stand-offish, be a bit more assertive, making sure that they understand that you (and your family) want this meeting because you care about them, and are concerned about their well-being.

