



# Talking To Your Loved One

*Discussing Home Care  
With Your Loved One*





## 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, like Meals on Wheels or free consultations with a home care agency, to help everyone ease into the "care at home" process.
- Focus on your loved one's issues, not just the concerns of others. They will be much more accepting if you both share similar wishes and concerns.

## Strength in Numbers

It's wise to have the family discuss care prior to having the loved one attend a family meeting on the subject. This gives the family an opportunity to get on the same page, which will help to show your loved one that all of you are concerned about similar issues.

# Persuading Your Elder Parent(s) to Choose Home Care

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 them 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 Family Plan

Setting up a family meeting can be a great place to begin having 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 part of the central discussions – if not, it could be difficult for you to come to solutions that are acceptable to them.

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 from your loved one (and possibly from others) is normal when discussing their independence - or lack thereof.

If they show signs of resistance and would like to delay discussions for awhile, don't push them into having the meeting. Realize they may need some time to embrace the subject- 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 their well-being.



Contact Visiting Angels 24/7  
for help at 800.365.4189



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

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.

Things to remember when you and your family discuss the possible need of in-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 your loved one's opinions.
- Realize it may take some time and several conversations to come to a consensus.
- Avoid blaming others or using "You" statements.
- Don't try to accomplish too much in one conversation.
- Anticipate the difficulty in persuading your loved one and reassure them of the freedoms home care will provide them.
- Discuss the option of a free, non-committal, in-home consultation with a Visiting Angels care giver to aid in the decision making process.

## Moving Forward

After the initial family meeting with your loved one where everyone has had the opportunity to express their feelings and thoughts, gently suggest that they make an appointment with their physician or a geriatric psychologist for a thorough evaluation. This professional evaluation can go a long way in helping them decide that they could use some assistance in their home.

Avoid nagging your loved one 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. Speaking with a doctor seems to make this decision easier.

Finally, be direct and speak with them about having a home care agency come to their home 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 does; be specific about the tasks a caregiver will 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.

## Stay Positive

Treat them as an equal – don't parent! Remember, your job is to help them make those decisions, not to make decisions for them.

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