



Difficult Discussions About the Future

Are you worried about your mom or dad—or another loved one who is living alone? Let's say you want to ask if they would consider moving to a senior living community. Chances are you'll encounter some resistance. How can you make it easier to discuss transitions with those you love?

Talking about Senior Living

Experts agree that the first step to any conversation involving a transition as significant as a move to a senior living community is to ask your loved one what they want—and then to listen carefully. It is important that any decisions about change are driven by the people who will be most affected by them. Older adults who reject the idea of moving to independent or assisted living, memory care, or long-term care often say they are worried about high costs, leaving their homes, losing space or giving up their belongings and giving up their independence as well. Your best chance of helping loved ones with their concerns is by listening to what they want.

Plan for More than One Conversation

You should also keep in mind that nothing will be decided or solved in one conversation. Think of your conversations with loved ones about a possible move to a care community as a marathon, not a sprint; a journey rather than a quick-fix destination. You also don't want to sound like you are telling your loved ones what to do. Instead, ask questions such as, "What do you want that would make you happy? Is there something you always wanted to accomplish but never had time for?" You may discover that a parent has spent years cooking meals for your family and wanted to create art instead. You may find a parent wants to travel, in which case maintaining a home would be a hindrance.

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Discuss How Senior Living Can Support Future Needs and Plans

As you talk through different scenarios, it's okay to ask loved ones about what needs to happen to make their lives easier; or what the plan is if they fall or become injured or ill. Each answer will inform what comes next. Another way to create a smooth transition is to help your loved ones experience a sense of control, which helps them maintain a stronger sense of self in the midst of change. Therefore, you might ask if he or she has spoken with friends who moved to a senior living community. Peers are much more likely to have influence with each other than a loved one's adult children. If your parents' friends are already living in an independent or assisted living community, it may be possible to get them together with your mom and dad. They may even decide to take a tour if a friend recommends it.

The main thing to remember during a transitional period in a loved one's life is that he or she needs to move toward something positive, rather than leaving everyone and everything behind. Focusing on positive reasons to move opens the door to more thoughtful decisions. That's a goal that's worth waiting for.

About Cassia

In 2018, Augustana Care and Elim Care came together to form Cassia. We are a faith-based, nonprofit organization with over 200 combined years of experience providing housing, health care and community services to older adults and those in need. In addition to several Minnesota locations, Cassia offers communities and services in Colorado, Florida, Iowa, and North Dakota. Residents in Cassia communities can find skilled nursing, assisted and independent living, memory care, adult day services and rehabilitation.



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Listen Carefully



Ask Questions



Be Patient



Focus on the Positive

Serving all by following One

