

Talking to Your Loved Ones About Assisted Living



Start Early

It is never too early to have conversations about your aging loved one's wants and wishes as they age. By doing so, you can give them a longer time to process the idea and get them on board on their terms—rather than when the extra care becomes critical and you reach “crisis” mode.



Prepare Talking Points

As you make observations about your loved ones, write them down. These notes can be concerns you have, comments they've made, or other conversations you've had. It's also important to consider your loved one's goals, wants, and wishes for the remainder of their life. This will help lead the discussion and also give your loved one reasons that resonate.

For example, “Dad, you said you wanted to stay active as you age. This senior living community has a gym and fitness classes. I think you'd really enjoy that.”



Don't Be On the Attack

It's important to remember not to be on the attack and approach them in a calm manner. Your loved one doesn't want to feel like they are losing control of making their own decisions. Listen with your full attention, give them time to reflect, and ask questions about how they feel.

For example, “Mom, I've noticed it's been more difficult for you to keep up with the housework. Wouldn't it be nice not to have to worry about maintaining a home anymore?” (As opposed to, “Mom, you need help. You can't do this on your own.”)



Consult With Others

Other family members, physicians, financial advisors, lawyers, or religious leaders can help you have a well-rounded discussion. With different view points added into the mix, you can present more benefits to your loved one and help them see the bigger picture. There are also social workers that can help facilitate these conversations if it's becoming too difficult.