



Tips for Talking to Your Loved One About Senior Care

When you begin to realize your senior loved one may be in need of care - more care than you or your family members are able to provide - you might wonder how to begin the conversation about senior care options with your loved one. Many people in this situation feel afraid and sometimes even guilty to bring up this topic, but the truth is that it's something that needs done to ensure your loved one can remain safe, healthy and independent for as long as possible.

Seeing your loved one age is not always easy, and while there's nothing you can do to keep them from getting older, you can put your mind at ease by knowing they are in a supportive environment, living life to the fullest. The sooner you can begin the conversation, the better. If there is one comment we hear more than any other at Concordia, it's, "I wish I would have made this decision sooner." Don't avoid it because you're unsure of how to begin the conversation - be prepared with these tips.

Tip 1: Listen and Empathize

- **DO:** Ask your loved one questions and listen to what they have to say.
- **DON'T:** Make the conversation one-sided by only telling your loved one what you think.

When you start the conversation, be open to actively listening to what they have to say and try to understand how they feel. Put yourself in their shoes and imagine what they're going through at this point in their lives. Empathize with them while reassuring them that you are their advocate and want to make sure they can continue to live a safe, happy, fulfilled life. If they aren't weighing in on the conversation, make sure to ask them questions and make it an open-ended conversation versus one where you are telling them what they need.



Tip 2: Express Your Concerns

Bringing up your concerns for the future with your loved one can help them understand your point of view. For example, if they recently experienced a fall, kindly remind them of this incident and tell them that you're concerned for their safety in their current living arrangement. Showing them that you are their advocate – not their adversary – and that you genuinely care for their wellbeing can help them to understand the importance of the conversation and the care you are suggesting.

- **DO:** Let your loved one know your concerns for their health and/or safety
- **DON'T:** Make the conversation one-sided by only telling your loved one what you think.

Tip 3: Alleviate Worries with Information

Before talking to your loved one, know what care options are available so that, if your loved one asks questions or expresses their concerns, you can respond back with the right information. Many seniors are hesitant because they have misconceptions about care options. Alleviate their concerns by educating them. If you're suggesting care at a senior community, you can offer to take them to visit communities to share with them first-hand the type of care and activities available to them.

- **DO:** Share information with your loved one about available care options, including details that can alleviate their worries.
- **DON'T:** Overwhelm your loved one with too much information.



Tip 4: Continue the Conversation

- **DO:** Take a break from the conversation and try again at a later time if you or your loved one becomes frustrated.
- **DON'T:** Push the conversation on your loved one all at once if they are agitated.

If you started the conversation, but didn't come to any decisions, it's important to bring up the conversation at a later time. Or, if your loved one seemed frustrated and didn't want to talk further about the subject, don't push it by talking about it further at that time as it might only continue to frustrate them. The conversation should not create friction between the two of you, and if you feel it is, take a break. It's important to remember that you shouldn't hold off on talking to your loved one altogether because of sensed frustrations; rather, ensure that it's an ongoing, positive conversation.

Tip 5: Ask for Help

If you need help talking to your loved one about senior care, try reaching out to a trusted family member, friend or pastor to talk to them with you. Perhaps they could give your loved one a different perspective and offer their own opinions or personal experiences. Also, leaning on family members and consulting with them when deciding what is best for your loved one can help to take some of the burden off of your shoulders. You could have a family meeting without your loved one being present to discuss the important topics of what is best for them, what is possible based on finances and who will be delegated to make critical decisions. This also helps to make sure everyone is on the same page and engaged.

- **DO:** Ask for help from family, friends or your community.
- **DON'T:** Feel that you're alone and can't reach out to anyone for support.

Tip 6: Get Expert Advice from Doctors

If you are able to talk to your loved one's doctor without violating their privacy, schedule a time to meet with him or her. This can help you to gain expert advice on what type of care your doctor feels your loved one actually needs. If your doctor suggests a retirement community or a higher level of senior care, then perhaps the doctor can bring up the subject at your loved one's next appointment.

- **DO:** Reach out to experts, such as doctors, for their advice.
- **DON'T:** Go behind your loved one's back if you don't have permission.





If you have questions about the different types of senior care or are interested in how Concordia can help you or your loved one, feel free to call us at 724-352-1571 or visit our website: www.concordialm.org



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Administrative Headquarters: 134 Marwood Road,
Cabot, PA 16023
724-352-1571 • concordialm.org