



Getting Your Parent To Acceptance

Getting a parent to accept that they need more care and are no longer safe living at home is a challenge faced by many children of seniors. Many aging parents are reluctant to leave their family home that is full of memories, move away from friends and neighbors, and give up their perceived “independence”. While there is no magic solution for getting a parent to acceptance and agreement on making a move to assisted living, the following are suggestions that may help facilitate the conversation between you and your parent(s).

1. Start the Conversation Early, Before an Emergency

Research has shown that starting the conversation early, before there is a medical emergency, “near miss” or high sense of urgency on your part (the child) leads to more effective communication and “buy in” from parents. It is recommended that the subject be brought into every day conversation so that it is perceived as less confrontational and provides a sense of the parent being the decision maker. Examples include asking your parents their thoughts on how they want to manage their care in the future stating “I want to know how you feel about this so that I can help you make a decision when the time is right” or using a real world event to bridge the conversation such as “I heard Mrs. Peters fell and is not going to be able to go home. I’ve been worried about you falling.



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How would you feel about looking at some options so that we are better prepared?”. Keeping the tone conversational and inclusive can open the door to non-threatening discussion. However, the conversation must be ongoing. It typically takes multiple conversations to move your parent towards acceptance and a willingness to actually start taking steps towards choosing, and moving into, a residence.



2. Use Affirming Terms

Assisted living residences are often referred to as “facilities” which reinforces stereotypes seniors may have of “old aged homes” of the past. Assisted living residences have come a long ways and are truly a residence. Using wording such as “home” or “residence” may help provide a more positive and accurate depiction for your parent. Avoiding words such as “institution” and “facility” are key to fostering constructive dialogue and perception.

3. Use Third Parties & Friends

Enlist other resources to reinforce your message. Often, a physician, pastor, lawyer or other trusted professional can assist and often times, will be better received. When you are at the stage of touring residences, it is often helpful to select locations where a friend is already living. Having that connection can ease fears of transitioning.



4. Emphasize the Services

Assisted living provides assistance with Activities of Daily Living (bathing, dressing, grooming), medication management and 24-hour supervision to name of few of the services. It is often helpful to also discuss attributes such as not having to perform maintenance on their house (repairs, lawn work, snowplowing), getting balanced, nutritious meals, activities, socialization and managing fewer bills (i.e. utilities) for example. Many of these responsibilities become areas of stress for seniors. Emphasizing how they can enjoy life more by being freed of many of these

responsibilities can be an effective motivator. This can be partnered by you expressing your wish for your parent to be able to enjoy their life to the fullest.

5. Peace of Mind & Enjoyment

Along with your wish for your parent to enjoy life, letting a parent know how concerned you are about safety, health and socialization should be brought into the conversation. If a parent is not yet ready to move for his/her own sake, often knowing that this decision is also for your peace of mind may be the piece that helps them come to a decision. Share with them that you are happy to be a caregiver, but allowing this responsibility to be given to the staff at a residence also will allow you to enjoy your parent-child relationship again, freeing you to have more time to spend with them just enjoying each other's company.



6. Finances

Assisted living is a significant expense. Many seniors believe that staying at home with caregivers is the more affordable option. Depending on the amount of services required to safely keep a parent at home, this perception is often not accurate. When one considers not just the cost of caregivers, but home maintenance, property taxes, utilities, food and grooming supplies – the math is often in favor of assisted living given the services provided are 24 hours a day. In conjunction with this, many seniors feel that they are failing their children if they do not leave an inheritance. While each situation is unique, it may be appropriate to reassure your parent that you are not relying on an inheritance for your financial future. Expressing that they deserve to live safely and enjoyably, and that this is of most importance to you, can relieve that sense of guilt they may feel about utilizing their savings for their own care.

7. Patience

Allowing your parent to make his/her own decision about assisted living alleviates guilt a child may feel about “forcing” a parent to move and ensures that the experience is more positive for both parties. It is the ideal situation for an individual to willingly choose their next step in life. However, this can take time. If you continue to face resistance, or have a parent that is unwilling to entertain any conversation regarding assisted living, take a step back. Wait – but then try again. It often takes a medical event, a “near miss” or other event to bring the issue again to the forefront. This provides another opportunity for the discussion. Patience and timing are key. Utilize these tools to re-engage when the timing is more appropriate.

Summary

Getting a parent to accept moving into an assisted living residence can be challenging. These tips are a guide to facilitate the conversation and identify some of the key concerns you might face from your parent that should be addressed. Once you reach acceptance, tour multiple residences to ensure you find the appropriate fit that will meet both medical needs, but is also a place your parent is happy to call home. Touring together and offering choices is a further step to ensure your parent is excited and positive about the decision. If you would like additional information about our residence or assisted living facilities in New Hampshire in general, please do not hesitate to contact us at (603) 343-4475.

About Carriage Hill

From the very start, Carriage Hill was designed to be a small assisted living facility that would offer intimate, highly individualized attention and a friendly, family style atmosphere in the style of true Yankee hospitality. Each of our 24 residents enjoys his or her own room and private bath with walk-in shower. For more information visit www.carriagehillassistedliving.com.