



Your Parents are Growing Older Talking with Them About Aging



When is it time to discuss the aging process? NOW! *Open communication with your parents is the most powerful tool you have to help ensure your and your parents age gracefully together. It is never too early or too late to begin this critical conversation!*

Topics to be covered in conversation and planning with your parents:

Talk to your parents now about what *their wishes* are pertaining to housing plans. If they plan to stay in their home, consider making minor home modifications, which will make it easier for them to remain mobile throughout their home.

Understand the critical role of legal and financial planning. Begin gathering information about your parents' financial planning. Learn where original documents are kept. Ensure your parents have prepared the necessary documents such as wills, advance directives and powers of attorney.

Talk to your siblings about how you *plan to divide responsibility* for your parents' well-being. If a parent suffers from a particular disease, learn all you can now about the disease and what a caregiver can expect as the disease progresses.

Learn about the *health care system* in your parents' geographic area. Become familiar with alternate accommodations,

how home care operates and what social services are available to the aging.

Learn about and document their *end of life wishes*.

Personal topics to consider when planning to provide eldercare:

- Ask: "Am I ready for the responsibility of caring for an elderly parent?" "Can I balance this additional responsibility along with my family and work responsibilities?"
- Discuss with others how they face the challenges of eldercare, problems they have encountered and solutions they used to address the various issues.
- Prepare yourself and your parents for what the future will bring. This will reinforce that you have done the best you can.
- Don't make long term promises to your elderly parents.
- Be prepared for some emotional encounters, but don't give up. Above all, try to remain calm.

Dos and Don'ts Relating to Family Care Giving:

DO:

- Involve and empower your parents in decisions about their future care.
- Become educated and aware of issues related to aging.
- Understand and accept your feelings and the feelings of your parents.
- Talk with others who may share similar situations.
- Concentrate on what your parents can do and maximize those efforts.

DON'T:

- Make promises you cannot keep.

Warning Signs that Your Parent May Require Assistance with Personal Care:

- Depression
- Missed meals
- Poor judgment
- Unsafe living conditions
- Wandering
- Inability to drive
- Difficulty with simple daily tasks
- Poor personal hygiene
- Limited mobility
- Incontinence
- Memory problems
- Mental confusion
- Lack of social network

Factors to Consider Before Relocating Aging Parents

- ◆ Their need for independence
- ◆ Their social network
- ◆ Availability of health care and eligibility for health care services
- ◆ Availability of publicly funded community resources
- ◆ Cost of associated care if publicly funded resources are not available

- ◆ Your needs and the needs of your family
- ◆ Your home environment – space, privacy and safety
- ◆ Your emotional, physical and financial capability to deal with their needs
- ◆ Lifestyle differences
- ◆ The impact on your job

Relocation May be Inevitable if:

- < Community services are not available
- < A physician recommend is
- < 24-hour care/supervision is needed
- < The person is unsafe to be living alone

Information for this fact sheet was obtained from: How to Care.com

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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture. The Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service provides equal opportunities in programs and employment.