HOW TO TALK TO AGING PARENTS ABOUT ASSISTED LIVING

Helping an aging parent accept that they require support to remain safely at home or assisted living is one of the most challenging conversations adult children face. However, recognizing when a parent is at risk and addressing their needs can significantly improve their quality of life.



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WHY CONSIDER ASSISTED LIVING?



- Assisted living provides supportive services for aging adults that enhance safety, independence, and well-being.
- For seniors with dementia, moving to a memory care community ensures immediate access to specialized care and resources.
- Quality assisted living facilities help maintain dignity and can actually provide a pathway back to greater independence and purposeful living.

Westminster Communities of Florida

For more information contact your **sales counselor** or visit **WestminsterCommunitiesFL.org**

HOW CAN HOME CARE HELP?

Home care services allow professionals to come into a senior's home to perform non-medical tasks for seniors like:

- Housekeeping
- Meal preparation assistance
- Socialization and companionship
- Bathing and dressing help
- Medication reminders
- Assistance with errands

These services are not covered by Medicare or private insurance, and clients usually need to contract for a set number of hours each week.

Sometimes conversations about home care for seniors progress to an understanding that assisted living options are a better fit after an agency conducts an in-home assessment.

SIGNS IT MAY BE TIME FOR ASSISTED LIVING

Consider the following signs, and consult with a physician for a professional assessment:

1. Declining Mobility and Balance
2. Difficulty Managing Finances
3. Housekeeping and Dining Challenges
4. Declining Personal Hygiene
5. Social Withdrawal or Mood Changes

STRATEGIES FOR HAVING T



Approaching this sensitive topic with empathy and a positive tone is crucial.

Parents may assume that if a health emergency happens, you will come to their home or they may be able to move in with you.

Providing care for chronic medical issues or recoveries is complex, and most adult children are juggling jobs and children.

If this is not something you can provide, and your parent has the financial means for professional support, be honest about that. Let them know you'd prefer they use their savings rather than keep them for you.

- **Enlist Support:** If you believe it will be difficult to maintain a compassionate tone, invite a family friend, minister, or physician to join the discussion.
- **Frame the Need Positively:** Emphasize that requiring support is not a sign of weakness or failure but a result of circumstances beyond their control.

- **Encourage Dialogue:** Ask for their thoughts, listen to their concerns, and highlight that your intent comes from care. Examples to try:
  - "We know that facing these changes is difficult for you, and we wouldn't suggest help if we didn't think it was the best way for you to remain independent in your home as long as possible."
  - "What I see is really worrying me. What can I do to help you stay independent knowing that I can't be here with you?"

- **Offer options:** Instead of "It's not safe for you to drive anymore, and we need your keys," say, "How about I arrange transportation to your appointments and the grocery store so that you don't have to deal with traffic and carrying bags?" Note: If a parent is exhibiting symptoms or has a medical condition that impacts their driving safety, you can contact your state Department of Motor Vehicles and file an Unsafe Driver Report.

- **Share observations as questions.** If the house appears cluttered or personal care declines, gently prompt: "Do you notice anything different about your clothing or hair?" Ask, "It seems harder for you to get up and down the steps. Have you noticed that?"

- **Suggest trial solutions to alleviate decision pressure.** Once a connection is formed with a home care helper, people often continue with services. Additionally, assisted living communities typically offer respite care where people can 'try out' the community.

- **Compare the cost** of in-home care services to assisted living costs, especially if daily care and nighttime care is or could be needed.

10 WHAT TO LOOK FOR WHEN TOURING ASSISTED LIVING

1. Do the community grounds, building, and resident suites look well maintained?
2. Is the community financially healthy? Is it not-for-profit or for-profit?
3. Are team members friendly and respectful? Do they greet residents by name and ask how they are doing?
4. Are caregivers happy to speak with you and open about their feelings working there?
5. Are meals prepared on site with fresh ingredients? How do the meals taste?
6. Are there welcoming outdoor spaces residents can access without needing staff support?
7. Do their events keep residents physically and cognitively active?
8. Are residents out and about and engaged with each other?
9. Is the facility part of a continuing care retirement community with additional health care or nursing services?
10. Are memory care services available and for what level of need?

KEY QUESTIONS WHEN RESEARCHING ASSISTED LIVING

Below, we've compiled essential questions to ask when comparing assisted living facilities.

How Do I Pay for Assisted Living?

Assisted living costs are typically not covered by Medicare, Medicaid, or private health insurance. However, long-term care insurance often includes assisted living fees.

Is the Monthly Rate All-Inclusive?

Understanding costs upfront is essential. Request a copy of the facility's contract to see what activities of daily living (ADLs) are included. Also, ask for the ancillary services fee schedule to determine if extras like transportation, housekeeping, linen services, and snacks are covered.

Do They Have Quality Staffing?

Staffing is crucial for quality care. Ask whether registered nurses are available 24/7, their staff-to-resident ratio, and their turnover rate. Inquire about caregiver training programs and philosophies. If possible, speak directly with caregivers to gain firsthand insight.

Do They Offer Nursing Care?

Westminster campuses are Life Plan communities, offering seamless transitions from assisted living to skilled nursing, post-acute rehabilitation, and therapy services. This ensures that residents don't have to relocate to receive advanced care.

How Engaging Are Their Activities?

Activities should be inclusive and designed by a full-time senior recreation specialist. Look for programs that promote movement, flexibility, cognitive stimulation, and emotional well-being.

Is There a Resident and Family Council?

Effective communication builds trust. Confirm that residents and families can participate in regular meetings with administrators to share concerns and feedback.

What Is the Occupancy Rate and History of Rate Increases?

Occupancy levels can reflect stability. High occupancy (90% or above) indicates adequate resources for staffing, dining services, housekeeping, and maintenance. Ask for a five-year history of occupancy and rate increases.



For decades, Westminster Communities of Florida has been a trusted guide for seniors and their families, providing clarity on assisted living options, resources, and financial considerations.

Whether you're exploring locations in Orlando, Florida's West Coast, St. Augustine, Jacksonville, or Tallahassee, we're here to help.

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