

How to talk to your aging parents when they need assistance

Talking with your aging parents and loved ones when they need assistance is often not an easy thing to do.

Each family is unique; each set of circumstances is unique.

But there are common threads with many. First, the aging person of concern needs to be considered for their capacity to make decisions. An individual's decisional capacity is based on their ability to:

- Understand relevant information
- Process the available information
- Personalize the context in which the decisions being made
- State their preference

Often times, families step in when they realize their aging loved ones needs hands on care. This would include help with meals (preparation, cooking, shopping); medications; safety issues (falls) and socialization (depression and isolation). Many families struggle knowing when it's time to reach out for help. Here are some questions to help determine this:

- **Emergency:** Would your loved one be able to get help in an emergency?
- **Risk:** Is your loved one at risk for being taken advantage of? (*financially, discussing private information, health, personal possessions*)
- **Your Life:** Is the amount of care you are doing interfering with your quality of life? Are you resentful of the time? Are you missing opportunities that you don't want to miss out on?

“Families often face real obstacles when dealing with an aging parent.”

Families often face real obstacles when dealing with an aging parent. Common obstacles to having the conversation and to the acceptance of care often include:

- Not starting the conversation early enough
- Family members not being on the same page
- Thinking too far ahead and not focusing on the here and now
- Having a factual conversation when that might be difficult for the aging person to understand

For more information, contact *Maplewood Senior Living*.



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