



**LUTHER MANOR**

A Life Plan Community

# HOW TO TALK TO YOUR PARENTS ABOUT SENIOR LIVING

*& Overcome Common Objections*



# HOW TO TALK TO YOUR PARENTS ABOUT SENIOR LIVING



Some of the most important conversations we need to have with the seniors we love are often the most difficult ones. When discussing the move to senior living with your older loved ones, it's important to be prepared.

Your mom or dad will most likely have questions and objections related to the move. It's a big decision and it is important they are involved!

The wisdom in planning means having options versus having no or severely limited options. How do we begin to have these much-needed conversations?



# HOW TO TALK TO YOUR PARENTS ABOUT SENIOR LIVING



## 1. Recognize the Risk of Waiting

We tend to wait to have important life planning conversations. There are several reasons for that:

- ✓ We fear rejection.
- ✓ There is discomfort when speaking the truth into another's life.
- ✓ We think someone else can or should do it.

**The earlier you start your discussions, the better.**

Encourage your older loved ones to make a decision when they have the power to determine their future and enjoy all the amenities a senior living community offers.

**By waiting, they limit their options and risk leaving the decision to someone else.**



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## 2. Recognize the Signs That a Conversation Is Necessary



Your loved one's medication is in disorder.



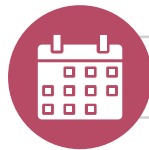
There are dents in the car or accidents.



Changes in the appearance or condition of their home.



A new chronic illness diagnosis or failing health.



Appointments are being missed.



Stacks of unopened mail.



Bills are not being paid.



No evidence of meal preparation and/or empty refrigerator.



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## 3. Understand How to Set the Stage

Typically, it is best to limit the conversation to immediate family only. A blend of in town and out of town family members is helpful. If it makes sense, it is okay to invite your spiritual leader. Here are some other tips to consider:

- ✓ Ensure that all family members presenting are on the same page.
- ✓ Have a specific agenda and assignments.
- ✓ Have facts and observations ready to discuss.
- ✓ Do not talk over one another and make sure to listen!
- ✓ Do not have the conversation at a family function or holiday setting.
- ✓ Provide a comfortable setting and seating.
- ✓ Ensure no interruptions (cell phones, TV, etc.).
- ✓ Be prepared
- ✓ Pray!



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## 4. Know What to Say

- ✓ Acknowledge the sensitive topic at hand.
- ✓ Say “I love you, I am so very concerned when I see this, we need to talk please.”
- ✓ Use humor when possible.
- ✓ Stay calm, avoid anger, and keep your volume down.
- ✓ Be respectful.
- ✓ Gently present the facts. Show them how moving can be beneficial.
- ✓ Be curious and ask follow up questions.
- ✓ Remark on points of agreement – and use as stepping stones.
- ✓ Accept compromise when needed to build a plan.
- ✓ Expect and accept that a repeat conversation(s) may be needed.
- ✓ Research the common objections older adults have about senior living and how to overcome them. *(Read on to learn more!)*



# HOW TO TALK TO YOUR PARENTS ABOUT SENIOR LIVING



Many older loved ones have objections to senior living – here are the four most common and how to overcome them:

## *“I’m not ready!”*

Most people are in denial about their age and mortality; it is hard to accept reality, plus many may view the move as “giving up.”

Overcome Mom or Dad being in denial by talking to them openly and having a dialogue. Be committed to keep having this conversation; it will need to happen more than once. Be honest about life circumstances and diagnoses, while reminding them aging is a gift. Make them aware of the risks of waiting and remind them that they want to remain in control of their choices.

## *“Retirement communities are where you go to die!”*

Many older adults associate the term senior living with the nursing homes their grandparents and parents experienced. They may also have the misconception that retirement communities are boring and “filled with old people.”

Challenge these common misconceptions by touring nearby senior living communities. When you tour you are able to see the amenities and activities offered. Take the time to speak to residents so you can understand the true experience of the retirement community. It’s also great to visit the community’s website to read testimonials and watch video stories.



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*"I can't afford it!"*

Many older adults are concerned about finances or are afraid to spend their money. Many seniors forget about the current and future costs of living in their house. When speaking about financial concerns, it's important to take a few things into account:

1. Compare the true costs of living at home versus the costs of senior living. Make sure to consider the potential need for renovation and future in-home care if health needs change.
2. Find out if your loved one has long-term care insurance – this could help pay for senior living, depending on the type of community.
3. Remind your loved one their home is not their biggest asset, their health is their biggest asset. Why spend money on their home and not their health and well-being? Remind them of the value of being safe, happy, and healthy.

*"I've lived in my home for more than 40 years! I have too much stuff to move!"*

The thought of leaving a long-time home can be paralyzing or overwhelming emotionally. Packing and moving possessions can also be potentially too physically demanding for some people. Think of the moving process as rightsizing, not downsizing, and remind your Mom or Dad they don't need to move alone. This objection is usually more about the memories than the items alone. There are also professional senior move managers who can help or even complete the process for you, including packing up, moving, and unpacking!





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## 5. Know What Not to Say

- ✓ Avoid demands.
- ✓ Avoid personal attacks, accusations, or yelling.
- ✓ Avoid grouping all important conversations at once.
- ✓ Avoid being emotional.
- ✓ Avoid any patronizing speech.

Don't Let Your Conversation Turn into an Argument!



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## 6. Know When to “Wrap It Up”

- ✓ Hugs (as acceptable).
- ✓ Express appreciation for having the conversation.
- ✓ Summarize action steps.
- ✓ Do your part (What is your assignment?).
- ✓ Don't lose momentum. Schedule a tour and go together.

### The 3 “R”s: Regroup, Re-evaluate & Respect

If your loved ones are adamantly opposed to exploring a move, agree to disagree. Then, review your approach. Would the idea of moving be more palatable coming from one of their trusted friends or advisors? Perhaps they could invite your loved ones to accompany them when they visit a community. Maybe the advisor could help your loved ones understand the financial or lifestyle benefits of making a move.

Your loved ones may choose to move right away or they may never agree unless circumstances force them into change. Regardless, it's important to respect their decision. Your relationship with your loved ones is important. Keep in mind that another opportunity for discussion could be right around the corner.



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**Don't wait until a crisis hits** and the choice to move to a senior living community isn't yours, or theirs, to make. Start talking with your older loved ones now and schedule tours so all of you can see senior living for yourselves.



*We're Here to Help!*

**Reach out to a  
Senior Living Advisor**

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