

Advocating for Needs that Come with Aging

As we age, we need more support to drive, cook or remember medications. We may also worry about health care costs or losing independence. If you have an aging loved one, talking about these issues is important.

Starting a Will

Establishing a will is important to protect life savings and valuable belongings. It can be uncomfortable to talk to a loved one about a will. In 2024, only 32% of U.S. adults said they had a will (Wills and Estate Planning Study). Many people wait until their 60s or older to make one. Plus, the percentage of over-70 households with wills has declined recently.

However, having a will helps divide possessions fairly and avoid family conflict. It is also important to name a power of attorney or another legal entity who can make medical or financial decisions if your loved one can't. Ask your loved one, "What do you want to pass on to family and friends after you're gone?" Be sensitive to their feelings. Help research options, set up appointments or just listen.

Talking about Driving

Sometimes driving isn't safe anymore for aging loved ones. Studies also show that crashes increase by our 70s–80s (Insurance Institute of Highway Safety, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration).

Talking about no longer driving can be tough. Try saying, "I noticed you had trouble parking the other day. Are you still comfortable behind the wheel?" Talk about other ways to get around, like a family schedule for rides or a senior transportation service. You don't have to take away freedom, but you can offer safer ways of transportation.

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Wills and Estate Planning Study

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Talking about Alternatives to Living at Home

Most older adults want to stay in their own homes as long as possible. However, sometimes their health requires more help than we can give. Less than 3% of U.S. adults over 65 live in assisted living or nursing homes (A Place for Mom), but more people are expected to enter them as our population ages.

Be compassionate to your aging loved one. Try saying, “We want to make sure you’re safe. Let’s talk about what would support you every day.” Offer to tour facilities with them. Ask what is most important, like having their own furniture, being near family, good meals and social activities.

Advocating for an aging loved one requires compassion. Having tough conversations now can help improve safety and quality of life in their later years.

#CareForCaregivers #RespectOurElders

If you or someone you know is older and struggling mentally, or needs support while caring for an aging loved one, you can find more resources through the **National Council on Aging** at www.ncoa.org.

Reviewed by Senior Director, Clinical Strategy & Research (LCSW, BCBA, CCM) and Clinical Director, EAP.