

# When to have “The Talk” about Transitioning to Assisted Living or Memory Support

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Thinking about when the time is right to talk to your loved one about making a transition to assisted living or memory support is a hard subject to think about, let alone talk about. It's a deeply personal, trying time in life if you are faced with this decision. It's a transition not only for your loved one, but it's also a transition for you as well. You are going to be creating a “new normal”. And that can be a scary feeling...no one likes change.

Then comes “the talk”. No time is an easy time to have this discussion. I'd recommend having the conversation with yourself first. Get as comfortable with discussing it between yourself and the air, your family, or to the steering wheel of your car as you can.

I would also say, start the conversation sooner rather than later. Each person is going to respond differently. Some of your loved ones will understand and agree, helping you decide what factors will warrant a transition. Some loved ones will make the decision for you, surprising you. Some will not. There might be tears and frustration, both from you, your family, and your loved one as the conversation progresses, then, hopefully, acceptance.

Some of the time, it is clear that a transition is necessary. Maybe it's gotten to the point you can't meet their needs anymore at home. Maybe they are beginning to wander and need memory support. Or, it could be that there

are some behaviors that have become difficult to manage at home. You say to yourself, “I can’t do this anymore” or “I don’t know what to do anymore”. Sometimes, it is when your loved one starts to have challenges with going to the restroom or won’t take a shower. There may be more to supporting your loved one than you even know how to approach. Many times, you forget to take care of yourself because you are so focused on taking care of your loved one. But...you have to consider your well-being as well as the well-being of your loved one.

However, sometimes the line is fuzzy. You are torn. There are good days and rough days. Those days can be daunting, coming at you without warning, or you can see it building in the eyes and body language of your loved one, and you aren’t quite sure how to respond. You say, “I can do this...this is just one day. Tomorrow will be better.” That may be the case, but is it the best decision for both you and your loved one...to keep fluctuating between now and then?

Maybe you have made the decision, knowing that an assisted living community that has memory support as care needs progress is in the best interest of your loved one. The staff are trained in meeting the needs of your loved one. They do this every day with their residents who have varying support needs.

A big factor to consider is how your loved one’s life will be enhanced by transitioning to an assisted living community. They will have socialization opportunities that aren’t possible at home or with home care coming in the home; live entertainment, socials, exercise, men’s groups, women’s groups, a thriving environment designed to meet the different needs of residents. You may say, “Mom has always been an introverted person, not really interested in doing any of those things.” And that’s okay, we all are made differently. However, in a community, residents are given the opportunity to try these things. If they go, outstanding! If not, we know they need more one on one or small group attention. Your loved one may surprise you. I have worked with many families who have told me, “My husband will never go to such and such.” And once they move in and get adjusted, they

are busy playing bingo, going to entertainment opportunities, getting together with their friends, etc.

Also, think about how your life will change. You will no longer have to be concerned about the last time they went to the bathroom or if they took a shower today (and how you are going to get them to take one). You can really ENJOY the time you have together. You know they are being taken care of; all of their needs are being met. You feel like you have the opportunity to do the things you enjoy without feeling guilty. You have peace of mind.

Now, the timing of the transition is something that is going to be unique to each family. If you are still taking care of your loved one at home, you aren't alone. Someone somewhere is going through the same thing. Liberty Senior Living communities offer support groups for those who are taking care of loved ones and going through this journey. By becoming a member of any support group, you are making the first step. You can be a resource for those in the decision-making process. Always remember that together, you support each other, are here to learn, and see that you are not alone in this journey.