

Conversation Starters to Discuss Home Care with Seniors

Noticed any of these signs that could indicate a senior needs extra help at home?

- Messy house, clutter, pots and pans piling up
- Confusing or missing doses of medications
- Difficulty with balance and mobility
- Confusion over once-familiar tasks
- Decline in personal hygiene
- Loss of weight
- Signs of depression, loss of interest in favorite hobbies and activities

When the signs of senior care needs start to appear, it is important to keep an open mind and not make assumptions as to why the senior might be experiencing difficulties. If it is decided that in fact home care is needed, here are a few ideas to help with the discussion:

Increasing Frailty

"I love you very much and I'm worried about your safety and wellbeing. I know someone who can help us with tips to make it easier for you to get around the house and remain as independent as possible. Can I have her come over to talk with us?"

"If you won't accept some help, you may need to move to a residential care home or move to a property that is more practical for you. But if you do accept some form of home help, it could allow you to stay in your home longer."

"We can hire a home care company or move you to a long-term facility, or you could move to Iowa to live with my sister. Which do you prefer?"

Falling/Difficulty with Mobility

"I don't want to sit by and watch you struggle and perhaps get hurt. Because I worry about you and want you to be safe and comfortable at home, I think we should talk about having someone come to the house to help out a little bit."

"Mom, I have some extra money. What do you say we find someone to help you with some of the bigger cleaning jobs at home like vacuuming and changing the sheets? It would make me feel good to treat you."

"I'm worried about you falling and hurting yourself when there is no one around to help. I know someone who can come and give us tips on how to make you and your home safer from falls. Can I set up an appointment for her to come over and talk with us?"

Trouble with Medications

"I don't know how you manage to keep all of those medications straight. I've heard about these medication dispensers that tell you when to take which medicines and even dispense the correct dosage. Wouldn't it be great to have one of those? I know someone who can help us with that."



Clutter

"Lately I've noticed that it seems hard for you to keep up with the housework the way I know you like it. Can we talk about why this is happening?"

"Bringing in an assistant for cleaning, shopping, meals and laundry would alleviate any worry about finishing up all of your daily household chores when you are tired."

"I'm afraid you might trip on one of these piles and hurt yourself. Let's come up with a solution together so that I don't need to worry and you can continue living at home if that is what you would like to do."

Declining Personal Hygiene

"Hiring a nurse aide to assist with your bathing and personal care would allow us more quality time together."

"I think it may be time to have someone come to help you out at home with a few things. Let's work together to come up with a solution that we can both live with."

"We can work together to select your caregiver and I won't leave you with someone you feel uncomfortable with. The agency and I will make every effort to find someone who shares similar interests with you and before you know it, I bet you and your caregiver will become good friends."

Losing Weight/Meal Preparation

"Dad, I noticed that Mom is having trouble keeping up with meal preparations and housework. It would be so nice for her to have someone in a few days a week to help with these things. What do you think?"

"Since Dad passed away, I noticed you are losing weight. For a little while at least, I think it might help to keep your nutrition up if we have someone help you with meal planning and preparation."

Can No Longer Drive

"I know you miss the independence of having a car and being able to get out as often as you would like. If you hired a home care assistant for a few hours several times a week, you could do the things again that you've been missing....shopping, visiting friends, running to the bank."

What services can a senior get from home care? Home care agencies help with any activities and needs that a person has throughout the day. Services can include:

- Companionship and conversation
- Grocery shopping
- Meal planning and preparation
- Diet monitoring
- Hygiene assistance, including bathing and dressing
- Light housekeeping
- Walking assistance
- Errands and transportation
- Help with bills and mail
- Supervising home maintenance and repairs
- Organizing closets and pantries
- Medication reminders
- Help with correspondence
- Appointment reminders
- Watching movies and playing games

To learn more talking tips or to set up a free in-home care assessment, contact **Continuum** at **(314) 863-9912** or **(636) 861-3336**.

Sources: eHow, AgingCare, Sign on San Diego