



Helping Your Aging Parents Accept Home Care Help

Convincing your aging parents to accept in-house health care

It is no surprise that, if given a choice, most of our aging parents would choose to stay at home (referred to as aging in place). Many seniors successfully age in place because their adult children and caretakers are able to provide them with home care solutions, which may include everything from a live-in companion to a nurse who checks in daily and administers their medications.

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Unfortunately, outside help is frequently not desired by the aging parent, whose desire is, of course, to remain completely independent, and if not, then only be dependent on close family. It is difficult to allow a stranger into your home and your intimate life and to accept in-home care. However, if your aging parents are not capable of caring for themselves, they may need your help in overcoming their perception that accepting in-home care means loss of independence.

Helping your parents accept care

The best way to get your aging parents to understand how valuable home care solutions can be, is to show them the advantages. Rather than your parent having to go to an assisted living or skilled nursing facility, he or she can remain in the house, spend far less money, and have a trained individual come to the house every day. Try different approaches if you need to: Suggest that accepting in-home care would benefit the spouse, even if in reality, it would benefit both the parents. We are more willing to do for our spouse what we would refuse for ourselves; so if both parents are living, this is a strong argument.

If your aging parent is concerned about a “stranger” providing intimate care, perhaps you can suggest a home care solution in which the care provider does more to help with non-invasive services like transportation, housekeeping, grocery shopping and cooking. The idea, of course, is that once the caregiver is there and your parent becomes accustomed to the person, your parent may allow that person to help with more things as the need arises. However, because the industry continues to experience a high turnover rate, do not expect the same person to always be your parent’s care provider.

Focus the need on you, not them

Another approach is to focus the need on you, not on your parent. Let him or her know that you are overwhelmed with your responsibilities and feel guilty that you cannot always provide the care you know your parent needs. Explain that it makes you feel better to have a home care solution in place, when you cannot be available. Rather than making your aging parent feel like he or she is losing independence, present it as your need.

Discuss with your parent’s physician or a geriatric care manager

You can also have a discussion with your parent’s physician and discuss your concerns with him. If the doctor agrees with you, he or she may be willing to tell your parent that it is now necessary to have home care assistance. You can also discuss the situation with a geriatric care manager, a licensed professional with special expertise in making these assessments.

It's not easy to assist your aging parents or convince them to accept in-home care. It is a challenging and difficult transition to make, from being the child to being your parents' caregiver. Realize that your parents are not angry with you; they are simply frightened of losing their independence. Do your best to be understanding and patient during these discussions.