



10 Tips on How to Approach Senior Living Options with your Mom or Dad

1. First assess what your parent's needs are. Are they able to maintain interior/exterior care of their home? Are they eating nutritious meals? Are they still able to drive? Are they occasionally isolated and lonely? Are they paying their bills?
2. Plan ahead and start early with discussions of options. Mom is more open to a discussion if you say "In the future if you ever need more help would you want to move to an independent retirement community or would you prefer to get help at home?" If you already have a few options in mind if and/or when a crisis occurs you and your parent are not only more prepared but the parent will be more accepting of the change.
3. Couples can often manage in their own home longer than singles. Often they help each other out. One may still be driving or able to still handle the financial affairs. The average age for needing some help is eighty-three. Options range from getting help in the home to independent or assisted living communities.
4. Mobilize during a crisis. If they end up in the emergency room or with a hospital stay use the momentum of the situation to help your elderly parent see that it is time for a change.
5. Don't give up. If during your first discussion mom and dad don't want to talk about this tell them you still want to talk about it. Ask them to think about it and bring it up again and again until you can flush out major objections to the change.
6. Be honest about your feelings and your concerns. Be respectful and caring as you discuss how your own family needs your time and attention. Be open about what help you can provide and what help you cannot. Be understanding but firm when presenting your concerns.
7. Start touring independent living communities. No one will ever want to move if they don't see it first. It can really reduce resistance once they see how nice some of the senior living places are. It is easy to bridge into a conversation on which community they like best.

8. Communicate to them how you can help with all aspects of the move. The whole idea and the process of moving is overwhelming. They know it is beyond their current capacity to facilitate on their own. There are moving companies that are senior specific to help adult children and seniors from start to finish with the entire moving project.
9. Focus on keeping positive with your siblings or other involved family members. This can be difficult as you may feel like not everyone is doing his or her share of involvement. Hopefully you are doing what you are doing because you want to help your parent. Not everyone will be involved at the same level and you may need to accept that, ask for specific help at times or hire out for certain services.
10. Remember they are still your parents and are not children. As adults, they do not like being "told" what to do or facing change. As long as they have the cognitive skills, it remains up to them and is their decision. In summary, remain positive and be persistent as in negotiating any challenge. Your parents need to be able to maintain their dignity while accepting their newly acquired limitations. It is a difficult but important skill to manage for both of you.