

Seven Ways to Talk to Your Parents About Getting Help at Home

November 2, 2010 By [Ryan Malone](#) [4 Comments](#)

It can be difficult to acknowledge the fact that your parent needs some help with day-to-day activities, let alone introducing to them the idea of hiring a [professional caregiver](#) for help. Your parent is likely to react to this decision with some resistance. Approaching the subject requires patience and tact. However, there are certain considerations to keep in mind that can help you approach this conversation with your parent with greater success.

Below are some ideas to consider, based on our years of experience with families facing these struggles:

- 1. List advantages.** Make quality home care provided by a hired caregiver desirable to your loved one. Some benefits for hiring in-home care for your parent may be: rather than having to move to an assisted living facility or nursing home, they can remain at home; in-home care is often less costly; they will be given one-on-one attention when their caregiver is there.
- 2. Focus on independence.** Explain why hiring a caregiver is a way for your parent to maintain their independence in their own home. Of course, this is easier said than done. Perhaps paint a visual picture for them. Have they already fallen once or twice? Explain what could happen if they fall again – how it could lead to broken bones, surgery and hospitalization, followed by a lengthy recovery period. The same method could be used if they frequently forget to take their medications, or often miss doctor appointments.
- 3. Try a different approach.** If your parents are still living together, try suggesting that in-home care would benefit their spouse. They may be more willing to accept the care for the sake of their loved one, even if in reality, it is equally beneficial for both parents. If they live alone, focus on concerns or activities that are important to them. For example, your parent may deny needing help, but may be amenable to someone helping with housekeeping and preparing some meals. They may acknowledge that they don't like to drive at night but still want to attend their weekly bridge game.
- 4. Make it about you.** Explain to your parent how much you worry about them. Or if you have been acting as primary caregiver explain that it has become too much on top of career or parenthood responsibilities. According to a recent study by Genworth, 55 percent of Americans say being a burden on their family is their biggest concern regarding long term care issues. Take this into consideration when approaching your parent about accepting in-home help. You might say, "Mom, I worry about you...and even if you tell me I shouldn't, it keeps me up at night. Would you try having someone come in once a week for me?"
- 5. Mitigate fear.** An elderly person can act hostile towards a hired caregiver at times, but this action is most likely out of fear. Prior to attempting to alleviate this fear, it is important to understand it. Common fears include loss of independence, losing control and dignity and financial worries. The presence of an outsider is likely to leave the elder feeling vulnerable. Take this into consideration when communicating with them, and respond with empathy rather than with frustration. Realize how your

own emotions may be impacting the conversation and increasing resistance. It is important to choose an appropriate time and place for these discussions and set aside time for them.

6. Test it out on a trial-basis. Try hiring an outside caregiver for in-home help on a short-term basis for respite, or recovery care, after being discharged from the hospital or after a fall. This provides an opportunity to show your parent that having a caregiver is not something to fear and often leads to them being open to receiving ongoing care. If they currently rely on you, another family member or friend as their primary caregiver or source of help, try using vacation as an excuse to bring in a professional caregiver while gone. Explain that it is for your own peace of mind.

7. Get advice from a professional. Try discussing the situation with your parent's primary care physician (this is most likely someone they have known for years and trust). If they share your concern for your parent, they are likely to help by talking to them, explaining why in-home care is the best option for them. Another option is to consult a [geriatric care manager](#), a professional with special expertise in making these assessments. They will be able to provide you with further advice on how to prevent resistance when introducing the new living arrangements with your loved one.

Photo Credit: [Eggybird](#)

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