

How To Talk to Your Parents About Elder Care

Matt Johnson
Founder & CEO
HealthBridge



What You'll Learn

Having the **very first conversation** about caregiving is the hardest part. The goal of this presentation is to help you:

1. Define your parents' need for elder care
2. Develop a framework for an effective conversation about elder care
3. Create an actionable strategy for that first conversation

*At the end of this presentation, you'll be able to confidently have the **very first conversation** about caregiving with your parents.*

Do Your Parents Need Elder Care?

- Has your mom or dad stopped doing something they have always handled independently?
- Have you grown concerned about their safety or independence?

Often, parents share your concerns, but don't know how to address them.

- We suggest you remind your parents that they're not the only one whose life is changing by telling them about an article you've read or about a friend whose parents are in a similar situation.

The Talk Before The Talk

We suggest having a family meeting *before* talking to your loved one about care (without the care recipient in attendance). It's important that you give everyone a chance to express their own needs, their worries, and the role they're willing to play as part of the care team.

At the family meeting, decide the following about the talk with your loved one:

- What family members should be there?
- Should a family doctor, lawyer or minister facilitate?
- What is the overall best outcome or goal for the meeting?

Location and Timing

Each of our parents is different and will absorb this message differently. It's important that you plan for the best possible outcome by setting the stage appropriately.

- Is there a particular time of day when your mom or dad is most active and conversational?
- Is there a favorite room (even chair) that makes them feel especially safe and comfortable?
- Is there an upcoming event or holiday that can act as a catalyst for the conversation?

Small Wins Are Important

This is a big conversation with very important goals. That said, it's often most effective when broken up into small, workable pieces. Small examples of how caregiving help would be useful are always easier to accept than broad "you just need help" statements.

- What are the little, non-offensive ways your mom or dad could use help? For example, a transportation assistance would be helpful, but certainly not as obtrusive as bathing assistance.
- If "big" caregiving help is what's essential, consider bringing in an expert like a doctor or social worker to make the suggestions.

What if You Get the Cold Shoulder

About 90% of the time, our clients start by denying there is a problem at all. This is natural and doesn't mean your parents are stubborn or unreasonable. Remember, you may have to have a version of this conversation several times. The important things are:

- Your loved one knows you're concerned
- You've given them a venue to voice their concerns about their future
- The planning process has begun, even if slowly

Listen Carefully

In our experience, caregiving is exponentially more successful if the elder is on board with the idea. They're still the expert of their own situation. Remember, you're having this conversation because you care about them and want them to be safe, comfortable and healthy.

If you work in concert, you and your parents will discover a mutually agreeable solution.

The next step is to talk to a HealthBridge care manager about how home care works. [Get started today!](#)