

How do I talk to my parents about aged

We understand that discussing aged-care can be a **difficult and sensitive** topic and we want to assist you in achieving the best outcome for you, your family and your parents.

Eventually the time comes when aged care becomes an essential discussion point and we appreciate that even the thought of such a discussion arouses fear, sadness, doubt, confusion and can be difficult to even initiate.

Naturally, we want the best for our elderly parents and convincing them that aged care is now essential and would give them higher quality of life is not always an easy process.

As children of elderly parents we like to think we could help and do as much as we can to ensure that their quality of life remains and that our parents can remain in their own homes for as long as possible. However, we can also feel that we are failing at being able to provide the best care, that it is simply beyond our capabilities and that it may even cause financial stress.

Our elderly parents can often resist the slightest mention of aged care for many reasons. Many believe that an aged care facility means the end and the final resting place. Of course their preference is to stay in their own home, with their own surroundings and family for as long as possible. However, this is not always the best option, particularly if health is at risk.

Many find it very difficult to come to terms with the fact that they are no longer capable or have very limited ability to be able to continue to handle everyday tasks. Many elderly parents also believe that their children should be obligated to see them through their final years in their own home, rather than seek professional help and it is their duty to provide that care, regardless of the fact that the children may well feel ill-equipped or are in fact not qualified to provide such care. In addition, disagreement amongst family members, guilt, fear, frustration, confusion and obligation can all cause friction and barriers to any move to aged care, which, of course, if not handled in a timely manner can be detrimental to the health of the parent concerned.

At TTHA we have talked to many families and discussed and totally understand the various concerns with regard to moving a parent into aged care. We suggest the following WHY, WHAT and HOW when it comes to having the discussion with a parent:

Do your research. Check your options and explore the possibilities in aged care. You want the best on offer and the most appropriate care for those you love.

Be patient and choose the right moment to raise the discussion. Pushing the point can cause confusion and frustration and barriers to further discussion.

You know your parents better than anyone else – rushing and hurrying can cause a great deal of stress – for both of you.

Respect that your parents also have their viewpoint. Listen and try to understand every aspect of their perspective. Express your concerns and explain WHY you believe that aged care is the best option. Consider getting your siblings, or other important people in your parent's life, together when broaching the subject. Be careful to avoid overwhelm however. No one likes group confrontation.

Explain WHAT it would mean to move to aged-care and WHAT is most important to them. Highlight the benefits and WHAT your parents will be able to do and achieve, particularly if they've been unable to do it in the past. Many residents that come and stay at TTHA rekindle their passions and connect with like-minded people. There's a community spirit here at TTHA and participation is highly encouraged – this is particularly relevant when social isolation can be a big issue for those living at home alone.

Keep it positive. History is history. It doesn't matter what has happened in the past, it's about what can be done in the future to ensure your parents have the best care possible and that ageing is not a difficult process, but rather an easy one and in a facility that genuinely cares and doesn't just offer a bed and food.

Explain HOW it would work, what the move would involve and HOW long it would take.

Explain HOW you and others would be involved, HOW you would organise visitation and HOW quality of life can be improved as a result.

Consider all the questions you are likely to receive in response – the earlier you answer these in your Why, What and How, the more comfortable your parent will be with the discussion.

Talk to us at TTHA. We can help. We have a range of options available for you to consider when moving to aged-