

Family Conversation Starter Guide

Helpful questions and tips for seniors and their adult children to begin open, respectful conversations about the future.

Why These Conversations Matter

Talking about aging, independence, and future housing needs can be emotional—especially between parents and adult children. This guide is designed to help make those conversations easier, earlier, and more productive.

Starter Questions for Seniors to Ask Themselves or Share:

- What parts of my daily routine are getting harder?
- Do I want to stay in my home as long as possible?
- What worries me most about getting older?
- What would make me feel more secure or supported?
- Who do I trust to help make decisions if something happens?

Questions Adult Children Can Ask with Care:

- What's most important to you about staying in your home?
- Are there any changes we can make to help you feel safer or more comfortable?
- How can we help make a plan together—so it's your decision, not a last-minute emergency?
- Have you thought about what you'd want if your needs change?
- Would it be okay if we explored options together—just so we're prepared?

Tips for All:

- Pick a relaxed, private time to talk — not during a crisis or holiday gathering
- Listen more than you speak — validate feelings, don't rush to solutions
- Use "I" statements — e.g., "I worry about you falling on the stairs" instead of "You need to move"
- Take breaks if needed — this is an ongoing dialogue, not a one-time talk
- Work together on next steps — like researching home modifications or attending a seminar
- If you're not sure how to begin, use a resource like this guide as a conversation opener: "I saw this guide online and thought it might help us talk about the future together – no pressure, just information."