

Talking to a loved one about a move to assisted living

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It can be hard to talk to your loved ones about moving into [assisted living](#)

, so don't push them too hard and make sure they feel safe and comfortable with the idea, one expert advises.

"Start the conversation as early as possible, and focus on what matters," said Dr. Angela Catic. She's a geriatrician and associate professor in the Roy M. and Phyllis Gough Huffington Center on Aging at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

"Think about if an assisted living environment could not just support, but enrich things that really bring joy to that individual's life," Catic said in a college news release.

As people age, it gets harder to take care of a house and yard. Adult children often start talking about assisted living when they see their parents are struggling, Catic said. After the death of a partner, a person may feel alone and lose their [social connections](#). This is where transitioning into assisted living could benefit an [older person](#), as such facilities often provide various social activities for their residents.

When starting a conversation with a loved one, consider covering these topics:

- Mention a few facilities you have already researched prior to the conversation. Whether you visit them in person or do online research, keeping a few facilities in mind can ease any nervous feelings about the process.
- Present a few options close to your loved one's home or facilities near the home of a family member. This could remind them that they won't be completely alone and will still have access to their family.
- Stay mindful of their feelings, as they could feel anxious or sad about having such a conversation. These emotions may prompt them to resist the move altogether.

- Mention any of their friends that you have heard from or ask them if they know anyone who has already moved into an assisted living facility, to normalize the idea.
- Make sure they feel involved in the process so they feel like they have control over what happens.
- Encourage them to come with you to tour a few facilities so they can visualize what their stay would be like there.

"Find a place they feel good about, too, and bring some of their belongings," Catic said. "It's typically a major downsizing of space, but it is important to bring things that have meaning to them and make it feel like home as much as possible. This may include items like a favorite chair, items they need to engage in a favorite hobby or family photographs."

If your loved one says no to the idea of moving to an [assisted living facility](#), don't keep pushing the idea unless you're truly worried about their safety. Hospitalization due to an accident or other [health issues](#) can also be a good reason to bring up the idea of assisted living again.

If they decline initially, you can always return to the [conversation](#) later, as their initial hesitation could be due to other factors that change, Catic said. When bringing the topic up again, ask them if they had time to reconsider the idea. Welcome their thoughts on the subject and offer ways you can make the process more comfortable for them.

Catic advises prioritizing finding your loved one a place that fits their needs and learning as much about it as you can so you know exactly what you are signing them up for. Even if a place looks nice in the lobby or on the tour, finding out more about what they have to offer can be an important part of finding the best fit for your loved one.

Additionally, learn about the staff and how often people move in and

out. On another note, some facilities might have connections to different social groups such as veterans or other interesting people with whom your loved one could socialize.

"Go beyond the beautiful, fresh flower bouquet in the lobby because this is going to be someone's home, not a hotel they're staying in for a couple of nights," Catic said. "You're looking for a feeling of home and fitting in with other residents and a staff that feel like family."

More information: The U.S. National Institute on Aging offers more tips on [residential facilities, assisted living and nursing homes](#).

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