Tips to Talk: Broaching the Subject of Care Needs

As difficult as it may seem to start a discussion with parents or a loved one about care needs, it can be essential for reducing worry and possibly preventing a serious emergency.

Try these suggestions for a smoother conversation:

- An important first step is to observe and pay close attention to any problems. It is best not to immediately jump to conclusions regarding a person’s needs. There may be logical explanations for certain behaviors that do not necessarily warrant special attention.
- Approach a loved one with a sense of planning to find a solution rather than trying to enforce your predetermined decisions. Discuss what you have observed using concrete examples and ask your loved one what she thinks is going on. Then ask what she thinks would be a good solution.
- Make suggestions rather than demands. If driving is a concern, suggest the avoidance of driving at night or when the roads are slick. If there is a medical concern, suggest an appointment with a physician “just to check it out to relieve my concerns, although it may be nothing.”
- If you have siblings, it may be helpful to involve them in the conversation. Be careful, however, not to give the feeling of “ganging up” on a parent or being overbearing.
- Talk when you and your loved one are at your best and try a new approach if the first one doesn’t work. If things start to break down or tempers flare, then try the discussion another time.
- If you have an open and direct relationship, just come out and tell him that you’d like to talk about these issues and ask if he would mind talking about them.
- Ask her about her past, her childhood, and her parents. Then move on to the future. What does she want most? How does she perceive the future? What worries her?
- Try first talking about someone else you know that is already dealing with some aspect of aging or long-term care. Talking about what’s good or bad about that person’s situation can be a useful launching point.

After the initial conversation, don’t expect that a decision will be reached instantly. It is important to give your loved one some time to absorb the information you share. It is equally as important to really listen to your loved one’s wishes and concerns.

Independence-4-Seniors knows how to make the transition to home care an enjoyable experience. Call today to learn more about our home care services and for more tips on introducing the option of home care to seniors.

Sources: Genworth, Aging Care, eHow