

Tips to help you start the conversation about residential aged care

Raising this topic can be emotional and challenging, however, actively listening to concerns and following the tips our team and residents share below, often eases worries and anxiety. The discussion may not be resolved in one go, just be patient and open to revisiting the topic as needed. Changes in health or circumstances may prompt new discussions, and ongoing communication is essential.

1. Choose the right place and time

Opt for a familiar setting that's quiet to avoid distractions. Choose a moment when emotions are calm and there's enough time for a thorough discussion.

2. Do your research beforehand

Gather information about residential aged care options, and understand the types of facilities available, services provided, and associated costs. This will allow you to answer questions and address concerns more confidently.

Give our care team a call on [1800 448 448](tel:1800448448) and we can help you with any questions.

“Access to comprehensive information can alleviate worries and empower them to make informed decisions about their care. Thus, offering them all the necessary information becomes essential in facilitating this process.”

– Monique Zipd, Leisure & Lifestyle Coordinator, Cooper House and St Marks Aged Care Communities.

3. Approach the conversation from a place of love and concern

Share specific instances that have led you to consider residential aged care. Have you noticed a gradual change in care needs or has there been a significant event, such as a fall or hospital admission, that necessitates care? Emphasise that the primary goal is to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

“I explained to mum she needed some independence from their children and the care of people who would be there when she needed assistance. I talked about the wonderful companionship that may arise from having female companions around. I also mentioned we would make her room suit her personality and secure somewhere that would accept Candy cat.”

– Nikki, daughter of Sylvia, a resident at Anam Care Aged Care Community

Read Nikki and Sylvia’s story at www.wmq.org.au/nikki

4. Approach the matter as planning for the future rather than an immediate action

Explains that their care needs will only increase over time, so planning now for residential aged care can avoid issues in the future, especially with the current demand for permanent aged care homes. Approaching from a future-proofing angle can help break barriers to start the conversation.

“We are seeing an increasing number of applications due to hospital admission and unable to return home. With high demand for residential aged care, planning now can prevent stress when a last minute emergency admission is absolutely necessary.”

– Deb Drummond, WMQ’s Residential Aged Care Admissions Team Leader

5. Listen ACTIVELY – what are their specific concerns?

Active listening is crucial. Encourage them to share their thoughts and feelings, and to express their concerns and desires **without interruption**. This demonstrates respect for their autonomy and helps build trust.

6. Set your own expectations and acknowledge emotions

The discussion may evoke strong emotions. Be prepared for a range of reactions, from sadness and fear to relief or acceptance. Validate these emotions and assure your loved one that their feelings are heard and respected.

7. Provide reassurance about the future

Address any concerns or fears they might have of moving away from their home and their loved ones. Are they concerned they will no longer be part of the family? Do they fear they will be forgotten? Reassure them that the decision is made out of love and what it means to everyone once they move out.

8. Involve someone they trust, if appropriate

This might be their close friend or a family member whom they have a strong connection with. This may help support the conversation and help your loved one understand why you are discussing residential aged care when they feel they can stay in their home safely and responsibly.

IF THEY ARE OPEN TO THE CHANGE

- **Give our care team a call on 1800 448 448 and we can help you with any questions.**
- Involve them in the decision-making process as much as possible
- Discuss their preferences on the type of care, location, and any specific amenities they may desire.
- Take them on a tour of their preferred aged care communities, meet the staff, and get a sense of daily life. This may address some of the common preconceived ideas about aged care homes.

IF THEY STILL REFUSE TO TALK ABOUT THE CHANGE

- Be patient and revisit the conversation when an opportunity arises.
- Try a centre-based respite care to test-drive the experience. These are aged care homes that offer care for a day, and even overnight. They provide daily activities and professional care.
Learn more at www.wmq.org.au/respite or call our team on 1800 448 448.
- Research aged care homes yourself, even if your loved one is not ready. This allows you to gather relevant information early. When they are ready, you will have information and options already on hand.

Need quick Aged Care answers? Our warm and friendly Aged Care Specialists are waiting to chat with you. Don't wait, connect today!

1800 448 448 • contactus@wmq.org.au • www.wmq.org.au