

Aging Parents and Options in Care

Mary, their youngest daughter, lives in the same city; however, her two siblings are out of state. She is married, has two children in college, and works full time, yet she insists on attending her parents' doctor's appointments with them. Mary's coworkers are getting somewhat frustrated. On several occasions, she has had to leave work suddenly due to various issues with her parents. Based on Mary's most recent observations of her Mom and Dad, she and her siblings are concerned about their parents' health and safety. They have discussed this with their parents and have agreed that, on the next doctor's appointment, Mary will address these issues.

They continue to reassure their parents that no one is trying to take their independence from them. On the contrary, everyone wants Alice and Jim to be safe. This is the time to explore all the possibilities before something serious happens, and they are making decisions from crisis mode

To make any transitions as smooth as possible, take the following into account: Include the persons needing care in the decision-making process as much as possible. They will feel a sense of control over their lives. This also allows for a positive approach in the process. Although you may not be able to adhere to their wishes, this approach generally helps in coming to an agreeable plan.

Focus on the strengths of your loved ones and their independence. Then they won't feel like their control is slipping away from them. It also encourages everyone involved to consider the person as a whole human being and not as someone unable to function independently in any area of life.

The following provides helpful information in determining the best options available:

- Create an "Assessment Form and Checklist" as a resource for your loved ones' needs. Re-evaluate the assessment with a healthcare professional every 3–6 months and review changes.
- Prepare a list of medications to be updated as necessary.
- Fill out a "Financial Worksheet" to help determine which housing and lifestyle changes are affordable.
- Make copies of the "Evaluation of Adult Living Facilities Form" that is provided in this book. Make copies to keep track of who you've called and where you've visited.