

## Next Steps After the Conversation

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If you've successfully prepared for and navigated the subject of senior living with someone you love, you may be wondering what happens next. Few people have the discussion with their family member just once. So how can you move the conversation along and make progress toward an actual decision? Read on to learn not only what you can expect to happen next, but what role you might play in the process.

After the conversation is over, you might have started feeling relief. And if so, that's a great step. But the journey isn't quite over, because there are still a few things to do before you start boxing up the belongings and filling out a change of address cards. The good news is that if you're this far along in the process, you're making some serious progress!

### **What Happens Next?**

You did your homework, had the conversation, and things seemed to go well... but what happens now? Everyone's situation is unique, but the following list is helpful no matter where you, or someone you love, are in the process.

#### **Don't stop talking.**

Big decisions require constant communication, and senior living is no different. Once you've broached the topic, it's important to keep the dialogue going with your family member.

Sometimes people don't respond well at first to the idea of moving. Often it takes multiple conversations — with friends, family, trusted advisors — for people to become used to the idea. But the key is to keep talking about it. That way, your loved one can feel like their thoughts and feelings are heard and valued.

#### **Choose a key decision-maker.**

This particular tip is geared toward the children who need to make decisions on their mom or dad's behalf.

If you are one of many siblings, you need to determine who is going to be the key decision-maker when it comes to matters related to your parent. This is especially important if your family is spread out in different towns, cities, or states. This not only streamlines the moving process but helps everyone avoid unnecessary stress, confusion, or complications.

### **Focus on the benefits of moving.**

There's something to be said about the power of positivity, especially when you're dealing with a sensitive and emotional subject like senior living. If you're talking to your aging parents about transitioning to a community, be mindful of the language you use.

Rather than focusing on what your mom or dad may not be able to do (like maintaining a house or safely living on their own), highlight all the benefits that come with being part of a senior living community: no more household chores or cooking meals, tons of new social connections and a wide variety of fun-filled activities, events, and excursions.

### **Visit our community.**

No matter who starts the conversation about senior living, one of the most important steps in the process is visiting the community you're interested in. You want to get a feel for what life looks like in a senior living community, and the best way to do that is with an in-person visit.

### **Put a plan in place.**

One of the best things you can do in this situation is to see the entire process as a journey with several bite-sized action steps along the way. Once you've reached the point where your family member is on board with the idea of transitioning to senior living, you need to make sure you keep the momentum going. That means thinking about things like where to move, when to move, and what to do with the house.

Because the process can be an emotional one, it's okay to be open and flexible with how soon each action item needs to happen. But do your best to make sure everyone knows what needs to happen next and when it needs to happen.