



Your Company

Family Caregiver Resources

Questions? Call Us!

[Your Phone Number]

Aging well in

Learn more at

“I don’t need help!”



It’s a common refrain and the bane of many family members:

Your loved one is having trouble, yet he or she refuses outside help.

This can put your relative at risk.

But if the worst happens and things go south, it also ends up making more work for you.

Doubly frustrating when you know

it could have been prevented.

Rather than battling head on for acceptance, you might try a softer approach:

Build empathy. Ask your loved one what their concerns are. Just listen and try to identify the hot-button issue underneath the reaction:

- **Is it an issue of cost?** He or she may not know about Medicare coverage or the actual cost of the service. Your loved one may also underestimate his or her financial resources.
- **Is it an issue of control?** Fear that this is the end of living independently.
- **Is it an issue of privacy?** “My home is my refuge from others.” Or concern about being judged for lifestyle choices.
- **Is it an issue of pride?** “I don’t need a babysitter!”

Validate feelings. All of these are valid reactions and worthy of exploration. You might start with, “I hadn’t thought of it that way. I see why you’re concerned...”

Explore thoroughly. Before problem solving, ask more questions. “Tell me more about that. It’s important that I understand.” The more your relative feels “heard” and the more you genuinely comprehend his or her issues, the easier it will be to work together to find a viable solution. Check out the back of this page for more details.

Is your relative resisting help?

At Elder Pages Online we frequently get calls from stressed family members who don’t know where to turn. They want assistance but are sure their loved one will refuse. Perhaps Mom is fiercely independent, or Dad’s dementia leaves him unable to recognize problems. Our team has great success arranging a meeting with the older adult and talking about concerns. Sometimes it’s simply easier for them to open up with a professional than to reveal problems to a family member. As the experts in family caregiving, we can help. Give us a call at 707.477.0700.



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Elder Pages Online supports older adults in as they plan for their later years.

Give us a call at 707.477.0700 to find out how we can support you.

Cost and Control



When a loved one obviously needs help at home but refuses to allow it, it's frustrating! Below are two common concerns, with suggestions for problem solving together.

Cost is a very practical barrier. Many older adults feel particularly vulnerable where money is concerned. They don't want to spend! But the cost of help depends on the type of help needed.

If licensed care providers are what your relative needs—for example, home visits with a physical therapist after a hip surgery—Medicare and supplemental insurance usually cover these costs.

If nonmedical help is needed (cooking, laundry, errands), there may be resources to assist. Maybe your relative has long-term care insurance. Perhaps he or she is eligible for VA benefits. Consulting with a care manager can bring those possibilities to light.

Or it may be that your loved one does not have an accurate picture of his or her financial resources. If you are the person your loved one trusts with money matters, ask if you can review the facts together to better understand his or her concerns.

Retaining control over their life. It's common for accepting help to symbolize "the end of my independence." That's a scary thought. Realistically, though, all of us will need assistance at some point. You might try asking, "Under what circumstances would you see yourself accepting help at home?" This allows your loved one to explore his or her own red flags. Plus, it gives you insight about what life event might make home care acceptable and why.

When hiring help, look for ways your relative can retain as much control as possible: Pick the caregiver; choose the days and times for help; decide on the care attendant's tasks and participate in giving the instructions; clarify if this is a short-term or long-term arrangement.

Privacy and Pride

It's not easy to lose abilities and admit you need help. The reluctant elder in your life is more likely to ease into acceptance if you provide good listening, compassion, and a commitment to working together.

Privacy. Having someone underfoot can feel intrusive, especially if your relative is used to living alone. Perhaps he or she fears being judged, or that word of unhealthy food choices or alcohol use may get back to the family. Maybe your relative tends toward hoarding and is embarrassed. Or has worries about safety with a stranger or the risk of theft. All of these are reasonable concerns for any adult who values their independence. You can address privacy concerns by

- starting with part-time help
- hiring a friend
- working with an agency that does background checks and drug testing

Pride. "Do you think I need a babysitter?!" Our culture values self-reliance. Anything that implies a need for help suggests weakness or incompetence. When you approach your relative,

- shift from "we think you need help" to "we want to help you stay in charge of your life." As noted earlier, working with your relative toward a common goal is a welcome and respectful approach.
- clarify what type of care is needed. For instance, a nurse to dress a wound is different from someone who cooks and cleans.
- start with a short-term arrangement, framed as "while you recover" or "just to see how it goes." Then consider a more permanent arrangement.
- talk about getting help as a way to liberate your loved one's energy to do other activities he or she really enjoys;
- emphasize your relative's other abilities. If Mom can no longer do housekeeping, make sure to praise her often about her cooking talents.

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