



**STONEBAY**  
*of Orono*  
SENIOR LIVING

## HAVING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS WITH PARENTS

When caring for a loved one who's adapting to the aging process and its side effects, being there for support through the many challenges that lie ahead is essential. However, it's common for older adults to deny that they're being impacted by different changes that come with old age, such as loss of vision and lack of mobility. They may not want to accept that they can't do activities that once came easily to them or that they're now reliant on care from a family member or friend.

There are various talks that caregivers will have to have with their loved ones that may cause resentment or frustration to surface. It's important that caregivers are prepared for these conversations to ensure that they're communicating in a way that assures their family member they're trying to do what's best for him or her.

### **1. Getting your loved one to take medication**

It can be challenging for seniors to accept that they're no longer in good health. When they're diagnosed with a condition that requires them to take medication regularly, caregivers may find that their loved ones are reluctant to take their prescriptions.

Almost half of older patients who experience deteriorating health have not taken their medications properly, including under-using their prescriptions. In addition to denying their poor health, seniors may also refuse taking their pills because they currently feel okay or find that the side effects make them feel nauseous or uncomfortable.

Caregivers should remind their loved ones that even though they may presently feel well, their medications are essential to maintaining their well-being. If seniors are experiencing debilitating symptoms, it's always best to notify their doctors. There may be alternative medications they can take, or the physician may inform you that feelings of discomfort are only temporary.

## **2. Encouraging your family member to quit bad habits**

If caregivers are trying to convince their relatives to quit habits that are negatively impacting their health, it's important to target one habit at a time. This will ensure that seniors don't get overwhelmed or discouraged. It's also key to replace the habits they give up with new ones.

For example, if they give up smoking, suggest taking daily walks to distract them from any cravings they may have. Although it's a good idea to encourage seniors to stop bad habits, caregivers should never make them feel like they're trying to control their life decisions.

## **3. Convincing your relative to stop driving**

The ability to drive is an important task for many older adults, especially those who live in suburban areas where getting around without a car is challenging. However, a common side effect of aging is hearing and vision loss. Age-related conditions, such as dementia, also cause increased confusion, which can cause seniors to get lost. When these symptoms begin to occur, driving is no longer safe.

The first thing caregivers should keep in mind is that getting their relatives to give up their keys isn't going to be easy. Regardless of how in tune seniors are with their current health, it's likely they'll deny that they're no longer in good physical condition to drive. If appropriate, caregivers can offer to drive their family members where they need to go, reminding them that being a passenger is more relaxing and less stressful.