

Exercise – Assessing the Situation

This exercise provides an opportunity for you and your family to consider key questions to explore potential for having older parents move in with you. You may not be thinking about this at the present time, but you may have other family members or friends considering various options and so this may be helpful to them as well. These questions can serve as a guide for discussions with your family. As you read through each section, we include some CARE Coaching questions to bring out your best thinking about what would be important to you.

Emotional Readiness

Examining your relationship with your older parents is an important place to start. Even if you have had caring, loving relationships in the past, determining whether or not you can actually live together is a big decision.

Some questions to think about:

- Have you had a relationship that has been open and honest?
- Have you been able to settle past differences?
- Are there any unresolved issues?

When you think about your older parents living with you, what's most important to you?

When you consider your relationship with your parents, what does that look like for you?

Living Arrangements

After determining “emotional readiness” regarding the decision, you need to examine living arrangements, particularly if one or both of your older parents have mobility issues (and you may have a 3-story townhouse!). Along with navigating the house, consider what furnishings can be brought in, privacy issues (for everyone!), and shared areas.

Some questions to think about:

- Is there enough room in your home for everyone to live comfortably?
- Do any major or minor adaptations need to be made to accommodate disabilities or mobility problems?
- Have you taken into account privacy issues?
- If one of your parents has dementia, have you considered safety plans?

Now that you're examining living arrangement issues, what is standing out for you?

As you are thinking more about your parents moving in with you, what is it that you are wanting from this situation?

Relationship Changes

Role “reversals” may be one of the most difficult factors to deal with. Parents who have made the final decisions in the family for many years may now be a voice as a member of the family but not be the final word. That may be difficult for everyone involved.

Some questions to think about:

- Are you prepared for role reversals that may occur?
- Are you prepared to make rules that may not always be warmly received by your parent?

When you think about potential issues with role reversals, what does that bring up for you?

What are some important things you want to consider?

Feelings from Other Family Members

Others in your family may be involved and affected by the move.

Some questions to think about:

- Have you discussed issues regarding caring for your older parents with other family members?
- Have you discussed the move with your siblings and other relatives?
- What are their concerns and feelings about this move?
- Have your children been consulted and do they understand the situation?

Considering what other family members may talk about, what is standing out for you?

Would the discussion with your family members open up some things for you to continue thinking about?

What is important to you as you move forward?

Considering what you've been thinking about, what are your next steps?