

Having the conversation

There comes a time in life when you may notice a shift in the quality of life for your parents. That change may be the result of physical limitations, memory loss or a drop in emotional well-being, often times caused by isolation. No matter what the reason is for the drop in their quality of life, the one thing for certain is you want to help – but where do you start? Life doesn't prepare us for this conversation and finding the right words or knowing the right time to talk isn't easy.

1. Set a time to have the conversation and make sure there are no other distractions.
2. Make sure and avoid talking during stressful situations.
3. Respect and honor your parent(s)' ability to make this decision with you. It is important to define what they perceive as "a quality life" – community or supporting services within their own home. Once this is defined, ask how you can partner with them to make their wishes a reality.
4. Use I and We statements. When bridging emotional topics, the use of I and We statements is the most effective. For instance, "I am concerned about your health because you are not getting proper meals with good nutrition" or "We have been noticing over the past few months that it feels like you're lonely now that you're not driving."
5. Educate and explore. Whether their decision is to move to a community or to utilize supportive services such as home care, you all need to understand the options and conduct research. Visit our website to learn about our wide-variety of living community options, adult day and home care services. ChristianLivingCommunities.org
6. If other family members are involved, your parent(s) need to make their wishes known to all and gain everyone's support.
7. Talk often. The decision to move to a community, unless during crisis mode, typically happens over a period of time. Be prepared to revisit the conversation several times.

Creating communities where aging is honored and celebrated.