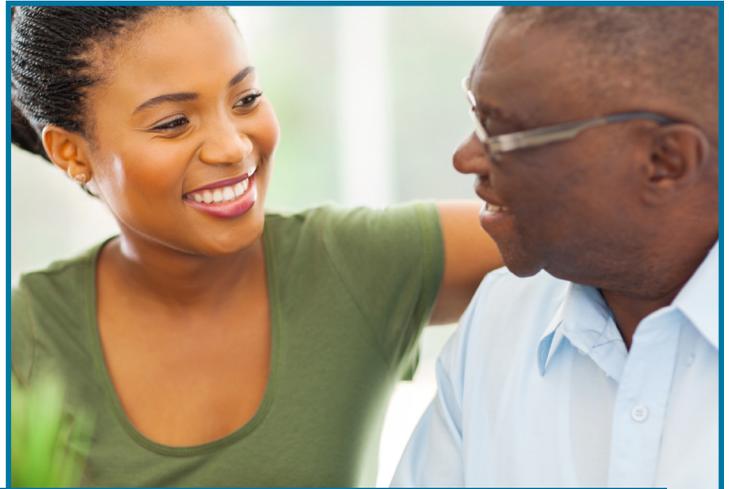


Caring for the elderly



There may come a time in your life when you, as the child, need to start looking after your elderly parents. The role reversal can have a dramatic effect and pose new challenges to you and your family, so here are some tips to help you cope.

Approaching a loved one who needs care

An elderly parent may begin to display signs of needing care such as:

- Falling at home.
- Having accidents while driving.
- Mismanaging their finances.
- Worsening health issues.

When you recognise these signs in your loved one, it's time to make important decisions about their future care. It can be a very difficult time in any child's life as your parent may insist that they are still fully able to take care of themselves and can continue to do so for the rest of their lives. Experts say the sooner you start bringing up the options, the better. It can help to lessen the blow the more it becomes part of everyday conversation.

Your loved one may resist the idea of moving and it can be difficult to change their mind. Psychologist Barry Jacobs, an expert when it comes to caregivers, says it may be necessary to give the topic a rest for a while.

The situation may get worse during this time, but it could help your loved one to realise that it is time to get help.

When your loved one agrees to care

If your loved one is of sound mental health, approach them with the options they have in their future living arrangements, like:

1. Will they move to your home where you will be the primary caregiver?
2. Will they stay home and get professional care?
3. Will they move to a home with a frail care facility and 24-hour care?

If you choose to be the primary caregiver, it's essential to think thoroughly about the implications it may have for your financial, family, and personal wellbeing. Carefully consider the impact it will have on your life and weigh up the financial aspects of your care versus other types of care.

If you won't be the primary caregiver, basing your decision on a person-centred level of care is a high priority whether they will be in a live-in facility, or receive care at home. The changes your loved one will face during this time will be challenging enough and deciding on who will care for them is a decision not to be taken lightly. It's essential to find someone who will fit your loved one's unique requirements, both medically and personally.