



Caregiving & Care Management

IMPORTANT FAMILY DISCUSSIONS

FACING THE FACTS

When envisioning one's future years, and with no crystal ball to look at and see where any of us will end up when our senior years are upon us, certain realities face all of us: Personal needs, Housing, Healthcare, Financial and Legal Matters, and Final Arrangements.

It is easy to assume that our loved ones will tell us what is important to them when the time comes, and we will easily be able to accommodate their needs. Most of the time this is not the reality and a crisis, death of a spouse, health setback or a myriad of other reasons keep this from being reality.

Family discussions before a crisis hits, or a health setback occurs, will make these basic needs much easier to attain. If at all possible, arrange a family discussion to find out what is important to your loved one.

Here are some of the issues that an older adult should answer for his/her children or loved ones:

These are not listed in order of importance

• PERSONAL NEEDS AND CONCERNS

What are your biggest worries about the future? Which family members or friends need to be considered regarding future plans? What aspects of your life are most important to you now: Staying close to family, returning to your homeland, re-connecting with lost friends and

loved ones, getting more involved in your faith/religion, learning a new skill that you always wanted to do, but never had the time? These are only the ice-breakers, there are many more your family member may offer given the chance to talk.

• HOUSING

Is remaining in your home priority number one, even if no longer able to take care of yourself or your physical surroundings? If this is not an option with declining physical abilities, where would you want to live? This is an important question to be answered and is often one of the most difficult.

• HEALTH

What frightens you most about growing older? Dementia? Loss of vision? Once identified, how can your family help? Are you still able to drive without being a danger to yourself or others? If not, how will you get around? If you become incapacitated and have to be kept alive on machines, is this what you would want? Do you have an Advanced Health Care Directive? Determining medical decisions is one of the most important discussions a family can have, regardless of age. What, and if, would you want done in different situations is important for any family to know, even if only a newlywed in your early 20's.