

Overcoming Objections to an In-Home Caregiver

It is common for those needing assistance with care to feel uncomfortable or even reject the idea of accepting the help of an in-home caregiver. The presence of an outsider suggests that family can't (or doesn't want to) take care of a parent's or loved one's needs. It also magnifies the extent of the elder's care needs and possibly makes him/her feel vulnerable. Below are some tips to ease the transition.

Transition Tips

- Introduce the caregiver to the senior before care begins, so the caregiver is not a stranger.
- If it comes down to a real fear of strangers in the home, consider having the caregiver come the first few times while a family member (or someone the senior trusts) will be at home. Leave for a short time and return. The next time, leave for a bit longer. Repeat this until the senior begins to feel comfortable alone with the caregiver.
- Find a caregiver who shares some common interests with the senior, whether that be a social connection like a church community, or a hobby or interest they might have in common.
- Find a caregiver with a personality and temperament that complements the senior's personality. A caregiver with an outgoing personality may be a better match with an outgoing senior than with a shy, quiet senior.
- Lay out the alternatives (such as a move away from home), which can make the home caregiver situation seem much more attractive.
- Frame the situation so it's about you rather than the senior. An example would be saying, "I know you are very independent and don't feel you need extra care at home, but I worry a lot about you and this would help me not to worry so much when I'm not able to be here."
- Start small, and ask the senior to "give it a try." Present the idea as a trial. Have someone come in for one day a week for a few hours, just to vacuum, take out the trash or wash clothes, and then build up to more care if needed.
- Reassure the patient constantly. Sympathize and understand the fear and vulnerability associated with the transition. Have serious, compassionate talks with him or her, and realize the first time may not work. It could take a few months before the senior feels more comfortable with the situation.

Experienced senior care agencies such as JFS Care know how to handle situations like this, and can not only help with finding a perfectly matched caregiver but can offer helpful advice to overcome objections to a home helper as well.

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