

Asking an Older Adult to Stop Driving



It's not easy to talk to an older adult about taking the keys away. Here are some suggestions to help you navigate this potentially complex and emotional conversation.

Driving is one of our greatest expressions of independence. But for many older adults, there comes a time when age-related conditions make it impossible to drive safely.

Consider the other person's point of view

- Approach the subject from a place of respect and concern, and acknowledge that this transition is very difficult. Instead of pointing to all the reasons they are unsafe to drive, explain that you share the same goals: to bolster their independence and keep them safe.

Discuss alternative transportation

- To ensure your loved one can remain active in their community, help them make a plan for alternative types of transportation. If they drive to book club every week, ask about carpooling, Ride sharing programs like Lyft or Uber can be easy and cost-effective, and offer the added benefit of helping your parent feel that by summoning a ride, they're still in control.

Give it time

- Be sure you allow enough time to process the emotions associated with this transition and make sure the conversation doesn't feel like an intervention. Your loved one is unlikely to decide to stop driving after one conversation, so be prepared to continue the discussion over time. Check in often and encourage your loved one to try other forms of transportation whenever possible.

Seek support

- A professional can help explain the risks of driving and suggest alternatives. Seniors At Home Care Managers are experts at facilitating these kinds of conversations. Our Center for Dementia Care social workers are also available to help you develop an individualized plan.

To schedule a dementia care consultation email dementiacare@jfcs.org or call 415-449-3712

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