

When Your Loved One Resists Care



DE LORO

caregiver resource center

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What can you do when you see that a loved one needs care, but he or she will not accept help? How can you encourage someone to accept assistance? The tips below may help.



Evaluate specific care needs.

- ✓ Ask, "What kind of help do you need or want?" Say what you think too.
- ✓ Consider very specific needs, such as help with meals, household chores or personal care.
- ✓ Ask about needs for social support, transportation or medical care.

Ask the person about concerns over accepting care.

- ✓ It may be easier to find solutions if you know the reasons for the person's resistance. Acknowledge all concerns – they are very real for that person.
- ✓ Some of the common reasons people resist care include:
 - Not wanting to give up their independence.
 - Being afraid of strangers coming into their home.
 - Feeling that the care would be too expensive.
 - Not wanting to burden others.

Involve the person in decisions.

- ✓ Approach the person with respect. If at all possible, the person should still be in charge of his or her care. Your role may be to facilitate decisions rather than to make them.
- ✓ Watch for openings in the conversation. For example, "You mentioned feeling tired. Are you having trouble keeping up with your chores?"
- ✓ If the person doesn't think he or she needs help, give examples of instances that have caused you concern.



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Present options.

- ✓ A person may feel more empowered – and more likely to accept help – if he or she has options.
- ✓ For example, a person who can no longer keep up a big house might choose to hire someone to help with the chores; use only a portion of the home (for example, just living in the downstairs); or move to a smaller space.
- ✓ A person who needs daily care might choose to have a caregiver come into the home, move in with a relative or go to an assisted-living home.

Talk about your needs too.

- ✓ Sometimes people will not accept care on their own behalf but will accept it if they believe it will lessen their family's burden.
- ✓ Say, "If I know you are cared for, it will ease my worry" or "I'm sure you could do it yourself, but it would make me feel good to do it for you."

When can a person no longer make decisions about his or her care?

- ✓ Some of the signs that indicate a person is unable to make decisions include:
 - Not eating, bathing, or providing basic self care.
 - Not paying bills or answering mail.
 - Doing dangerous things like leaving stove burners on.
 - Showing symptoms of memory loss or confusion.
- ✓ All of these signs are subjective. Ask the person's doctor to help you evaluate his or her ability to make decisions.

If the person still refuses care...

- ✓ If the person's health or safety is at risk, say gently but firmly, "We have to address this. We can't put it off any longer."
- ✓ Bring in other people. Call a family meeting to strategize how to help the person accept care.
- ✓ Ask the person's doctor, clergy or another outside person to step in. Sometimes an outside person will have more influence.



Don't give up.

- ✓ Sometimes a person will refuse at first but over time may accept care.
- ✓ Keep offering and providing what care the person will accept.
- ✓ Take advantage of "windows of opportunity." For example, you may be able to start providing help during an illness or following a hospitalization.

Take care of yourself.

- ✓ Knowing that a person needs care but won't accept it can be very difficult emotionally. Try not to take it personally. It is not your fault.
- ✓ Consider talking about the situation with supportive friends, family members or a counselor. Consider joining a caregiver support group.



To find information about support groups and services in your area, consult your local phone book or search online. You can also call the Eldercare Locator at 1-800-677-1116, or visit its website at www.eldercare.gov on the Internet.



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