



Should Your Parent Move In With You and Your Family?

While most elderly people prefer to live independently, financial or medical conditions may force family members to consider moving an older relative into an adult child's home.

Frequently, adult children who are trying to help the older person cope with a crisis will conclude that moving in with them is the only available alternative. In the short term, that may be true; in the longer term, however, it may present more problems than most people realize.

The decision to move in with an adult child can be an emotional roller coaster for the parent as well as the child and his/her family. Therefore, before making such a determination, think through the following questions:

1. If the older relative is disabled, are you willing to take the amount of time that is needed to provide the necessary care?
2. Have you fully considered all of the obligations of caregiving, including hands-on care, transportation to and from medical/social services, etc.?
3. What are your motivations -- genuine concern or guilt?
4. If you work and have school-age children, are you willing to sacrifice your personal lifestyle and social activities to care for the older person?
5. How is your relationship with the older person? Have you had a long term relationship with the person or only been with them for short periods of time?
6. What do your siblings think about the arrangement, and how will such a move affect them?
7. Can you comfortably and practically accommodate the person in your home? Are the living arrangements acceptable to the other family members living at home?

Once these factors are considered and a decision is made to make the move, communication channels must be kept open. Family meetings to discuss concerns, personal problems and frustrations, should be held regularly and attended by all appropriate family members.

Maintaining your own "space" is especially important. You must make time for activities with your spouse and children. Similarly, the older person must also be provided his/her own "space" to talk with friends, other family members and at times, just be left alone with their own thoughts.

Adult siblings should also be included as part of the care plan. Just because your

parent moves into your home doesn't mean that your brothers and sisters should be allowed to retreat from their responsibilities. Ask for help with coordinating caregiving chores, finances, respite care for yourselves, and trips to the doctor and shopping.

If you do find the burden of caring for a dependent older person becomes overwhelming, don't try to hide it from your friends and family. Caregiving support groups are available to provide assistance and help for the working caregiver. But if the situation cannot be reconciled, don't hesitate to talk with the older person and your family. Remember, there may be several other alternatives available.

**Call Quest EAP for a referral to our Eldercare Specialist
or get details about your eldercare benefits.
This is a free and confidential service.**



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