

Having the Hard Discussions

Aging In Your Own Home

Statistics show that most of us after the age of 60 wish to remain in our own homes if possible. After retirement, a small percentage of retirees move in with their children, but very few of us choose to be a burden on our children. Some, due to financial difficulties have no choice, but the majority of us wish to remain where we are. This checklist identifies many of the issues that must be addressed to ensure that aging in home occurs with minimum disruptions.

1. If Possible, Have a Family Meeting.

A family meeting is a great opportunity to clarify expectations regarding any duties that you might expect of your family regarding your decision to age in your own home. A frank conversation about this upfront will help avert potential resentment or disappointment down the line. The family is also the first and most important partner in creating social glue. Social glue as we define it is the net of caregivers, health care providers, friends, and neighbors as well as family members that assist us as we age in place.

Take a tour of your own home with a member of At Home Chesapeake. Honestly think about how to make it safer and more navigable. Everything from grab bars any place you routinely sit, to a variety of high technical gadgets developed to help us live independently are worth considering. Get a second set of eyes to assist you to ensure you are not blinded by the existing comfort levels. This is also a great time to start the process of “declutter” to get rid of decades of accumulated belongings that will make your home harder to maintain as you age.

3. Seriously Focus on Developing a Master Aging Plan.

Your Master Aging Plan (MAP) is a compilation of thoughts, documents, and decisions that you believe are essential to help you map your future. Each member MAP is a unique, personal picture and reflects your wishes for your future as you age in our



community. It is thoughtfully constructed by you and others with whom you choose to collaborate. It clearly spells out the strategic path you wish to find yourself on. It is a living document, never finished, and constantly updated as your life changes. Because it is hard to answer hard questions, we all tend to procrastinate. Don't. Work on this every day, a little at a time, and it will ultimately become a useful tool for both you and your social glue community.

4. Be Open Minded Regarding All Options.

It is hard to let others into our personal routine, even if it means overall quality of life improvements. Options for our independent living have greatly changed just as much in recent years as those for out of home care. Independent living doesn't mean going it alone. Your options run the gamut from basic services such as housekeeping and meal delivery all the way to live in nurse's aides. As you plan, consider less obvious solutions, such as home sharing, help from community agencies or other non-profit organizations.

5. As You Plan, Build Your Future in Joyful Independence.

Independence as we age is predicated on our willingness to be interdependent. At Home Chesapeake members understand this and willingly choose to form social connections that enable our personal independence. Plan your life around those things you enjoy. We most often choose to live independently for a reason. Reflect on those pastimes and pleasures that are most important to you- whether it's a meal with the grandkids, a drive in the country, or a weekly card game with friends or a Saturday cruise through Home Depot. Find ways to continue to pursue these pleasures and others on this marvelous journey of aging in place will gladly assist you.