

# THE FAMILY CAREGIVER

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## DEALING WITH RESISTANCE

Dealing with resistance is a common issue when working with the elderly population. Family caregivers often turn to elder care professionals to find ways to help them deal with caring for their elderly loved ones. However, what if they find a solution but their elderly loved one says no? This can become very challenging because no one can force a person to do something or to accept help. Yet, we have a responsibility to jump in when that person isn't looking out for his/her own best interest and could be a danger to himself or to others. Elder care professionals often visit the homes of older adults and see that the mail has been neglected for the last six months, there's no food in the refrigerator, the household condi-

tions are unsafe or unsanitary, and the individual hasn't taken care of himself in a very long time. Elderly people resist help for many reasons including fear of loss of control, fear of loss of independence, denial of the problems he/she is having, and sometimes even pride. We as the elder care professionals are often called upon to help the families overcome their loved ones' resistance. We can suggest tips to help families open the lines of communication but cannot make a person do something. Below are some ways that family caregivers can communicate more effectively with their elderly loved ones in order to effectively address the current circumstances:

1. Understand your loved one's point of view. Ask him/her questions about what he/she is feeling and what their short term and long term goals are.
2. Avoid role reversal. Do not take away your loved one's power to be involved in the decision making process.
3. Get an evaluation by a nurse, doctor, social worker or other professional. Your loved one may listen better to a professional.
4. Know when to intervene. If you feel the situation is dangerous to your loved one's health and they are at serious risk, get professional help to evaluate the

risk, get family members involved, as a last resort you may need to call adult protective services.

5. Start small. As long as your loved one won't be in any kind of immediate danger, try easing him/her into trying the assistance.

A few important things to remember are to maintain that person's dignity by keeping him involved in the decision, do not get sucked into old arguments, and keep trying. If the person is not in any imminent danger then perhaps it's best to wait a few months. It's never a good idea to force someone to do something because it could make that person feel distrustful of those around him and vulnerable. In the end the individual must be ready and willing to accept help.

## RESOURCE OF THE MONTH

Transitions USA is a senior move management company that helps seniors move out of their homes and into senior housing. Transitions USA is particularly helpful to seniors that don't have someone close to home that can help them with the daunting task of

moving into a new home, or for busy families that don't have the time to help their loved one move. Transitions USA takes the time to ensure that all the senior's belongings are treated with care and respect. They provide a personal assistant and move

coordinator to help plan and organize the move. Call 631-421-3781 for more information. Their website is [transitionsusa.com](http://transitionsusa.com).

