



## CARING FOR PARENTS/GRANDPARENTS A Ministry for Older Adults Of the KY Conference

### HAVING HARD CONVERSATIONS

Often there comes a time when families gather to make decisions regarding care for aging relatives. Under the best of circumstances, these conversations can be difficult. When family dynamics are complicated, the situation can be more so. Here are some suggestions to make life easier for families.

- **Plan *with not for*.** Include the older adult in the decision-making process and allow him or her to share feelings, ideas, and preferences.
- **Know wishes.** Ask your relative what he or she wants and write it down. All of us want to have a say in our life choices and it is no different as we age. When preferences are known, it ensures that we are honoring our loved one's wishes and can diminish family conflict.
- **Create an agenda.** If you choose to have a family meeting to discuss a care plan, create a meeting agenda and set clear goals for your time together. This can help the discussion stay on course and, hopefully, address the intended issues.
- **Involve family who live at a distance.** Sometimes, family members can feel left out of important decisions – especially if they live far away. Skype, FaceTime, and ZOOM are great tools to use to help all family members feel included!
- **Do your homework.** Before the family meeting, learn what the choices are: moving in with a family member, assisted living facility, nursing home, etc., but remember to include the wishes of the aging person in any decision making.

Once the decision is made as to direction, let the aging person go to various facilities so he or she can be comfortable with the choice.

When he or she is ready to leave their home, have a blessing time as you all remember and celebrate what happened in this home. Take him or her to the facility and bless the room/apartment/etc. An order for this service can be found in the [Caring for Parents and Grandparents](#) section of this webpage. You might ask his or her Pastor to lead the service and include Holy Communion with your family member assisting with Holy Communion.