



# Should you move in with your family member?

## Is it time you considered moving in?

If you are concerned about your older family member living at home alone, you may be starting to think about other living arrangements for them. If your situation allows it, you may also be considering moving in.

Some people make this decision with their family member after talking about a range of options. Others find themselves choosing to do this because their family member refuses to move and is felt to be at risk.

*"I wanted Mum to live with me but she wouldn't move out of her house, nor would she consider aged care. I moved in."*

Before moving in to your family member's home to provide the support they need, take time to fully consider the situation. Don't rush this important decision.

## Moving in - the benefits for you and your family member

Depending on the amount of care and support you have already been providing to your family member from a distance, moving in could very well make this 'job' easier.

People who moved in to help a family member say the benefits are:

- ▣ less travel;
- ▣ the ability to provide more care and support;
- ▣ the ability to monitor more closely, reducing stress and worry;
- ▣ developing a closer relationship with your family member;
- ▣ regularly adding quality to their life - e.g. playing music;
- ▣ adding to existing care arrangements - not making changes;
- ▣ having your family member stay in their familiar environment, which may help to maintain their independence; and
- ▣ reducing some expenses through living together.

*"It took me 2 or 3 years of support and caring before I took the bull by the horns and finally moved in."*

## Moving in - what you might not expect

With hindsight, some people who moved in to support their family member say that they experience the following:

- ▣ feeling 'on duty' all the time - as if life revolves around caring;
- ▣ losing their sense of being an independent adult;
- ▣ losing their sense of identity - feeling defined as 'carer';
- ▣ feeling increased expectations - by their family member and others;
- ▣ a decreased social life and lost friendships; and
- ▣ decreased opportunities generally - e.g. work, travel, etc.

Others who moved in talk about the all-consuming role they took on. They found that the boundaries around caring were less clear and that their sense of freedom was lost.

*"Suddenly, I felt like my wings were clipped."*



## Weighing it up - is moving in the best option?

Before you make any decisions about this, take time to consider the situation carefully. Look at the benefits for you and your family member - and what you will both be losing or needing to compromise.

Remember that many older people continue to live at home alone - often with the help of family, friends and community support services.

Here's some advice:

- ☑ Talk openly with your family member if possible about the difficulties they are facing -look for ways around these.
- ☑ Talk openly with other family members and friends - ask for their advice, help and support.
- ☑ Organise a family meeting if you think this would help.
- ☑ Consider a range of alternative living options and supports.
- ☑ If you decide to move in, make it clear from the beginning to others in the family that you expect help and support. Ask for their help with specific tasks.
- ☑ Set some conditions with your family member if you need to - e.g. agreeing to community services or regular respite.
- ☑ Remember that your decision is not irreversible.

Contact the [Commonwealth Carer Resource Centre](#) on 1800 242 636\* for information, support and advice about moving in, as well as any other issues relating to caring for a family member or friend.

### Further information:

- ☑ [How and why to hold a family meeting](#) - information sheet.

Contact the [Commonwealth Carer Resource Centre](#) on 1800 242 636\* to request the above information sheets be sent to you - or to find out about other information sheets in this series.

\*Free call except from mobile phones. Mobile calls at mobile rates.

We do our best to keep these links up to date, but the internet changes all the time. If you can no longer access any of the above resources, please go to our [Internet Troubleshooting Guide](#), or email us at [website@carersvic.org.au](mailto:website@carersvic.org.au)