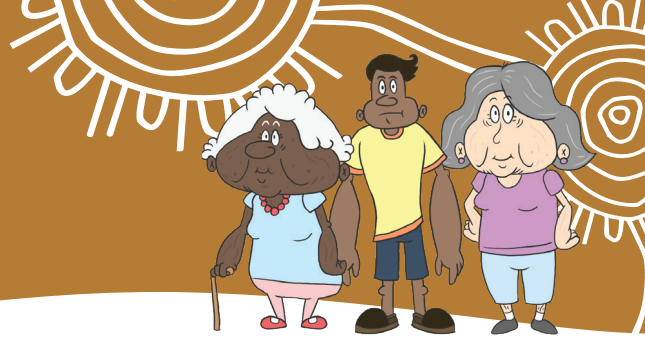


Support Elderly Parents



It can be hard to watch our parents getting old. We grew up believing they were our indestructible protectors and seeing their hair turn grey and their mobility decline can be a tough reality to face.

While it's natural to worry about your parents ageing and the challenges that may arise, doing this constantly can take a toll on your mental and emotional wellbeing.

We offer some advice to support your parents through later life, and hopefully provide some peace of mind to yours.

Talk to them about the future

It's never too early to talk to your parents about what they'd like for their senior years and beyond.

- Some questions to ask might include:
- Is your Will up to date, and where can it be found?
- Who will be your durable power of attorney?
- How would you like to be cared for if you require support?
- What type of funeral or memorial service would you prefer?
- These may be hard conversations to have, but they're essential to ensure your parents' wishes are honoured down the track. Knowing what your parents want before the time comes can provide clarity and comfort for you and them.

Ask them about the past

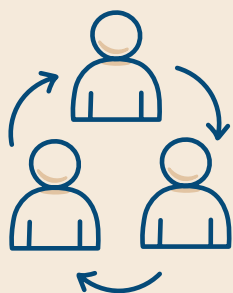
As well as making plans for the future, now is the time to ask your ageing parents all those questions you've been meaning to ask about their past.

A common regret for a family who's lost a loved one is not finding time to ask about their past experiences, memories, hopes, dreams, and regrets. Maybe it's because our parents are the most familiar people to us, and we've known them our whole lives. But how well do you know your parents as people, before they were 'mum' or 'dad'?

Some conversation starters might include:

- What was your childhood like?
- Did you like school?
- Who influenced you most as a child, teen, and adult?
- Who was your first love?
- What world events had the biggest impact on you?
- What are you most proud of?

Asking your parents about their lives before you came along can help you grow closer and ensure their favourite stories remain a part of their legacy. Plus, your parents will probably love the opportunity to reflect on their past experiences to an eager audience.



Take turns checking in on them

As your parents get older, you may feel a sense of responsibility to visit and call them every day. But this can be an unrealistic expectation, especially if you have your hands full with a job and kids of your own.

Organise with other family members to rotate visits and phone calls to ensure your parents have regular contact with loved ones, and no potential problems go unnoticed.

This will give you peace of mind that they're being checked in on, without putting pressure on yourself to take sole responsibility. You might even like to come up with a roster of designated days when you each visit or call.

Take them to appointments

There are many reasons why it's a good idea to accompany your elderly parents to their medical appointments.

They may have a hearing deficit that makes it hard for them to understand what medical professionals are saying, and be too shy to ask for things to be repeated. They may not feel comfortable asking questions about their options, and simply agree with whatever is being suggested. Maybe they rely on public transport and don't keep up with their appointments as they should. Or perhaps they're simply not relaying the 'whole story' about their health conditions to the people they care about.

If your parents consent to you taking them to appointments, this can help remove these communication and logistical obstacles. It's also a great way to spend more time with your parents and be involved in their lives. You could even make it an enjoyable routine by treating them to coffee at a café afterwards.

