

Essential Conversations When Moving Near Family

Practical ways to prepare for a smoother transition and stronger relationships

If you're considering a move to be closer to family, it's worth taking time to think about how this change might affect your day-to-day life. Living nearby can bring wonderful opportunities for connection and support, but it can also shift the dynamics of your relationships. In my work with clients, I've seen that older adults often experience three main challenges during this type of transition:

1. **Losing established social networks**
2. **Navigating new expectations with family**
3. **Feeling dependent—or stressed—by increased caregiving roles**

If any of these resonate with you, having open conversations about boundaries before you move can make the experience more rewarding for everyone.

What are boundaries?

Boundaries are simply the limits you set to protect your time, energy, and comfort. They aren't about keeping people out—they're about creating a healthy framework for letting people in. Clear boundaries make it easier to enjoy time with loved ones without feeling overwhelmed.



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Topics worth discussing with family before you move:

- Would you like help making new social connections in your new community?
- Do you need occasional support caring for a spouse so you can take breaks?
- How often would you like to see each other?
- What kind of support—emotional, practical, or both—would you appreciate?
- How do you feel about overnight stays from family?
- Are drop-ins okay, or would you prefer advance notice?
- Will you share keys or garage codes?
- What's the ideal length of a visit for you?
- Do you want to help with household tasks, cooking, cleaning, or babysitting?
- Are young children welcome anytime, or do you have concerns about noise or breakables?
- Are there any house rules to communicate upfront? (e.g., no shoes, no smoking, no pets)
- What are your biggest concerns about moving closer?

Why this matters:

Setting and discussing boundaries now helps prevent misunderstandings later. You and your family can create clear guidelines, foster mutual understanding, and approach your new proximity with respect for each other's space and needs.

In the end, you get to decide how you use your time and resources—and your family members get to decide how they can best support you. When both sides are clear and comfortable, everyone benefits.

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