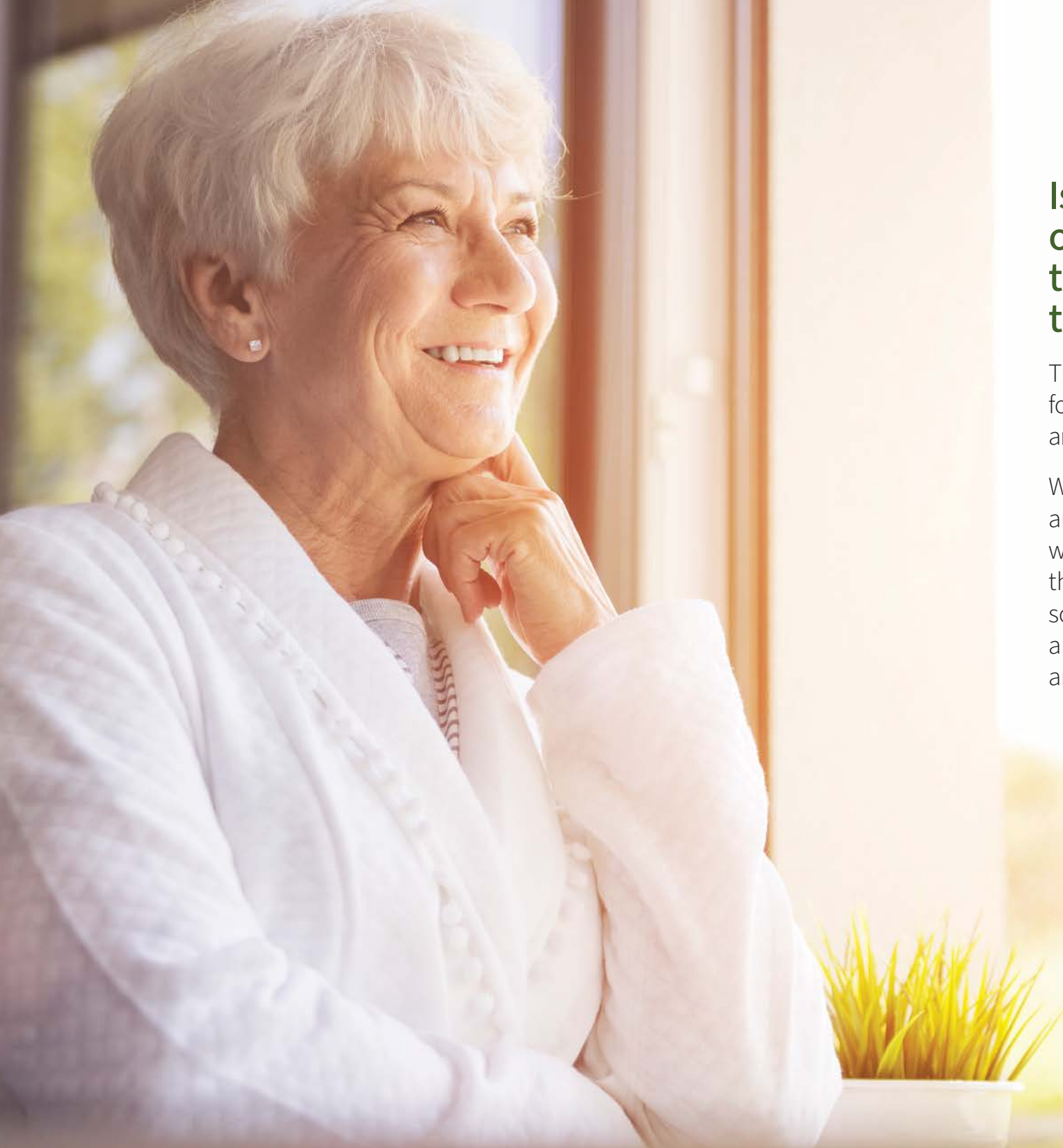




LUTHERAN
LIFE VILLAGES

10 Things

THAT YOU NEED TO KNOW
ABOUT YOUR AGING LOVED ONES



Is your loved one still living on their own, but beginning to need a bit more help throughout the day?

Then now is the right time to begin planning for their future – while they're still independent and able to join in on the discussion.

Whether it is a parent, grandparent, sibling, aunt or uncle – the fact is, 70% of people with an aging relative haven't yet talked with them about plans for future care. Here are some helpful tips to start the conversation and ensure that they will live safely, happily and cared for as they age.



1.

Understand your loved one's health status

How are they doing? 'Pretty good' isn't nearly specific enough. As people age, they can be secretive about their health – afraid of burdening their family. That's why you should take a proactive role in staying informed.

- ▶ Ask them for permission to talk to their doctors about their current situation and what additional care they may need in the future.
- ▶ Keep track of any incidents, such as falls, cuts, colds or memory lapses.
- ▶ How's their mobility and stability? Are they having trouble going up and down stairs? Are they comfortable using the shower? Falls become a serious health risk as we age, but they are preventable.
- ▶ It's important you know what medications they're taking and why. Make a list, including dosages, instructions and side effects.
- ▶ Have copies of all current medical records and health insurance policies.
- ▶ Arrange with your loved one's neighbors and friends to keep you informed about any developments.
- ▶ Do they have instructions, such as a living will, to direct their future care?



2.

Understand your loved one's financial status

It's not that you're being nosy, but you'll need to be aware of and have access to, information about finances. You'll want to know what resources are available before the need arises. Talk to them and get their approval to go over their finances.

- ▶ Review retirement savings, assets (including home), Social Security, pensions and any other income.
- ▶ Determine if they have enough resources to cover any unexpected expenses and future care.
- ▶ Consider asking your loved one to give you durable power-of-attorney. If they become incapacitated, you'll be able to make important financial decisions on their behalf.
- ▶ Understand the value of a living trust or transfer or death instrument. It can save your family time and money by avoiding probate.
- ▶ Gather important documents that you'll need for estate planning, including wills, tax returns, deeds, titles, accounts and life insurance policies.



3.

Keep in contact with the rest of your family

The time to plan a family meeting is before your aging relative has a problem that requires immediate attention. You may face some resistance having this talk, but you need to make it a point that everyone has to be involved. By working together now, you'll avoid any discord or hard feelings later.

- ▶ Try having the first meeting in person, perhaps when those who live far away come in for a holiday.
- ▶ Prepare questions in advance so that the meeting stays on target.
- ▶ Stay calm. Family dynamics can cause the conversation to become heated or highly emotional. It's a stressful subject.
- ▶ Agree on who will be the primary "voice" for your loved one. Everyone should agree to shoulder some responsibilities, so that no one takes on too much of a burden.
- ▶ Listen. It's normal to have different perspectives on such an important issue. Be willing to consider the other side.
- ▶ Communication is key when working with your family. Be sure to continue to stay in touch and provide regular updates.



4.

Caring for your aging relative can be very stressful

Looking after them is a giant role reversal, and they may feel frustrated that they need to rely on you. Your relationship may become strained. We all experience stress in our lives from time to time, but the stress of looking after your loved one as they age can become overwhelming.

- ▶ Be aware of symptoms of stress, such as headaches, indigestion, poor concentration, sleep difficulties, anxiety and irritability.
- ▶ Consider joining a caregiver support group.
- ▶ Stay connected with family and friends. They can provide emotional support and keep you grounded.
- ▶ Take steps to stay healthy: Establish a good sleep routine, stay physically active and maintain a balanced diet.
- ▶ Take regular time off to relax and enjoy your favorite activities.



5.

Understand the importance of socialization

Social connections are central to our physical and mental well-being. But for older adults living at home, it can be difficult to maintain these vital social relationships. Illness, loss of friends or loved ones, lack of mobility and other issues can result in isolation and lead to depression and physical decline.

The good news is that increasing social interaction enhances health – reducing cognitive problems, lowering blood pressure, improving heart health, easing depression and enhancing quality of life.

- ▶ Plan outings and meals with friends and family.
- ▶ Encourage a regular routine outside the home, such as shopping, walks and visiting friends.
- ▶ Consider an assisted living community where social connection and daily activities are simply part of everyday life.



6.

The difference between independent and assisted living

As your loved one ages, they're likely to begin needing more daily assistance. Although they might not be struggling with certain tasks, such as bathing and cooking, they may be tired of home maintenance. At this stage, a move to an independent living community may be the solution. They can enjoy a maintenance-free residence, make new friends and enjoy an active lifestyle.

If they are still largely independent but begin to need help with what are called "activities of daily living" (ADLs) – such as bathing, dressing and managing medication – it's time to look at assisted living. It is a great long-term senior care option, but not all communities are the same.

- ▶ Look for a community that takes time to truly get to know your parent — creating care plans that reflect their routines, preferences and health needs.
- ▶ Ask how licensed nurses and trained caregivers support residents throughout the day and night.
- ▶ Consider whether memory care expertise and rehabilitation services are available within the organization if needs change over time.

It's important to do your research and visit a few communities before you decide as a family what the right fit will be.



7.

If needs change, who will care for them?

As your loved one ages, their needs may evolve. Understanding what additional support options are available can provide reassurance and help your family plan ahead with confidence.

- ▶ Memory care assisted living and dedicated memory care provide specialized support for residents experiencing cognitive changes.
- ▶ Skilled nursing care and short-term rehabilitation services are available for recovery after illness, surgery, or more complex medical needs.
- ▶ Care plans are reviewed and adjusted as needs evolve, with clear communication and guidance for families along the way.



8.

Who will provide care for them?

When you tour a community, meeting the staff is essential. They will be interacting with your loved one every day. Talking with them can give you a clearer sense of the quality of care and support you can expect.

Here are some questions to ask:

- ▶ Are licensed nurses available on-site around the clock?
- ▶ How many team members are available to support residents during the day and at night?
- ▶ What training and background checks are required for caregivers?
- ▶ During your visit, observe how staff interact with residents. Are they attentive, respectful, and engaged?



9.

Choosing the right community

Finding the right community for your loved one is a challenging but ultimately rewarding experience. You want to find a community that fits their needs, as well as their personality. It's important to be prepared so that you're not overwhelmed with choices.

Here are some things to do when conducting your search:

- ▶ Take a tour. Is the community clean and its facilities up-to-date? Stay for a meal, and observe scheduled activities.
- ▶ Is leadership visible to residents and visitors? Do they take time to interact with you?
- ▶ Learn what services and activities are available.
- ▶ Ask about security and staffing, particularly at night.
- ▶ Put yourself in the place of your loved one. Will they like the food? Are people friendly? Will they feel at home?



10.

Come for a visit

The best way to understand our assisted living community is to see it for yourself. Meet our team, spend time in the community and experience the support our residents receive each day.

You'll see how attentive care, genuine connection and a welcoming community come together to create a place where people thrive.

Call 260-286-8472 or visit LutheranLifeVillages.org to schedule your personal tour.





LUTHERAN LIFE VILLAGES

The Village at Anthony Boulevard

*Senior Living Apartments • Assisted Living • Short-Term Rehabilitation •
Long-Term Care • Memory Care*

6701 South Anthony Boulevard, Fort Wayne, IN 46816 • 260-286-8104

The Village at Inverness

Memory Care Assisted Living

8075 Glencarin Boulevard, Fort Wayne, IN 46804 • 260-619-6638

The Village at Kendallville

Long-Term Care • Memory Care

351 N Allen Chapel Road, Kendallville, IN 46755 • 260-286-8238

The Village at Pine Valley

Short-Term Rehabilitation • Long-Term Care

9802 Coldwater Road, Fort Wayne, IN 46825 • 260-286-8276

The Village at Pine Valley Assisted Living

Assisted Living • Memory Care Assisted Living

11430 Coldwater Road, Fort Wayne, IN 46845 • 260-286-8251

Piper Trail

Active Senior Living

8151 Glencarin Boulevard, Fort Wayne, IN 46804 • 260-300-2523

