



## *Extending the Family*

# When an Elder Moves Into Your Home

Many working adults are faced with the question of whether to include an aging parent or another older relative in their household. If your relationship has been strained in the past, living together may not be the best plan. For people who have had a strong, loving connection with their parent or relative, the decision may be easier.

Even if you invite an elder to join your household, there are many practical and emotional issues to consider before making the change.

### **Sharing Your Home**

- ✓ Talk about your expectations, wishes and fears ahead of time.
- ✓ Will the older adult have trouble adjusting to your rules?
- ✓ How will the older person be included in family activities?
- ✓ Will you be able to find other living arrangements for your elder if the situation is no longer working?

### **Communication Styles**

- ✓ Do you and your elder have a way of sorting out differences?
- ✓ Does your elder's communication style mesh with the way your family resolves differences?

### **Care Requirements**

- ✓ How much care does your elder need?
- ✓ Does he or she need help with bathing, medicine and other types of personal care?
- ✓ Can other family members help?
- ✓ Does your community have home health services that provide transportation, nursing or personal care for older adults?
- ✓ Have you discussed long-term care arrangements?
- ✓ Does your employer's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or your local commission on aging provide information?

### **Physical Space**

- ✓ Can your elder walk up stairs or will a room on the main floor be needed?

- ✓ What arrangements can be made for added privacy?
- ✓ Will someone have to give up their room?
- ✓ Will you need to modify bathrooms, stairways or laundry areas for your elder's safety?
- ✓ Does the older person prefer a very cool or very warm environment?

### **Financial Considerations**

- ✓ What household expenses will increase?
- ✓ Can the older person contribute?
- ✓ Will a family member need to cut back on work hours, thereby decreasing income?
- ✓ Will there be financial advantages when the older person and family share expenses?

### **Social Activity**

- ✓ Once an elder moves in, plan time together and time apart.
- ✓ Encourage the older adult to see friends and participate in activities at an adult day care or senior center.
- ✓ Allow your elder to maintain a sense of dignity and privacy with a life of his or her own for as long as possible.

### **Making It Work**

- ✓ Your elder will benefit from the warmth of family care while your children will enjoy the perspective offered by an older adult.
- ✓ You'll reap the satisfaction of caring for an elder in his or her later years.



***With good communication, planning and use of community resources, inviting a parent or elder to join your household can be a positive experience for all.***