

## KNOW WHEN PARENTS NEED HELP

You may have noticed a change in your parents that creates a worry. A father who was always neatly dressed seems to be wearing the same clothes repeatedly, and may go several days before he shaves. A mother, who always took such pride in having food enough to feed an army, tells the grandkids to go buy some treats at the local convenience store because her pantry is empty.

Use the following acronym “PARENT” to check those observations that apply to your parent now.

### PHYSICAL

- Unexplained weight loss
- Bruises or cuts
- Falls or accidents
- Shortness of breath
- Swollen ankles
- A new or a worsening cough
- Lack of energy

### APPEARANCE

- Changes in personal cleanliness and grooming
- Changes in the cleanliness of clothes
- Wearing clothes that are inappropriate for the occasion

### REALITY

- Conversations not making sense
- Losing keys or getting locked out of house repeatedly
- Making errors or forgetting to take medications
- Inability to recognize a dangerous or hazardous situation
- Not paying bills on time
- Missed doctor’s appointments
- Making phone calls at strange hours
- Crying, listlessness, not getting dressed, or a change in eating habits
- Increased anxiety

## ENVIRONMENT

- Dishes piled up
- Spoiled food
- Change in cleanliness or tidiness of the house
- Empty fridge or inadequate food supply
- Scorching on the bottom of pots and pans
- Repair jobs not getting done
- Burned out light bulbs
- Unread mail piling up
- Changes in the amount of clutter around the house

## ENGAGED

- Withdrawing from usual activities
- Becoming isolated
- Decreased desire to socialize

## TRANSPORTATION

- The touchy subject of driving – are you worried about your parent’s safety?

### Reflect

1. What observations have you made about your parent’s behaviour or ability?

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2. What do other family members or friends say about your concerns?

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## ***TAKE ACTION***

Now that you have identified your concerns and shared with family or friends, what do you do next?

### **(1) Communication**

Learn more about ways to have a conversation with your parents that is more likely to produce cooperation than conflict.

Because communication is so important -- and can be challenging -- we have several articles on our website.

#### **Conversations with Aging Parents: Co-operation or Conflict**

<https://youragingparents.ca/talking-with-aging-parents>

#### **Tough Conversations with Aging Parents**

<https://youragingparents.ca/tough-conversations-with-aging-parents>

#### **How to Listen: How to be Heard: Have a SMART Conversation**

<https://youragingparents.ca/smart-conversation>

### **(2) Find the services**

Check into the health and social services available in your parents' community.

#### **Information Services for Seniors**

<https://youragingparents.ca/seniors-information-services/>

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Source: Maureen Osis, Judy Worrell, & Dianne McDermid. *Your Aging Parents: How to Prepare. How to Cope*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 2010. ElderWise Publishing. [youragingparents.ca](https://youragingparents.ca)

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