The holiday check in

How to have conversations about care

How to introduce home care successfully.

Created by Clinical Psychologist Melissa Levi in partnership with Mable.

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You've done so much already: you noticed the early warning signs at Christmas, shared your concerns with Mum or Dad, and have seen the GP.

Now, Mum or Dad needs a bit more help at home.

You might be thinking:

- How do I even bring this up?
- What if Mum gets angry?
- What if Dad feels as though I'm taking away his independence?

These worries are completely normal. Many parents hesitate or push back at first, not because they don't need help, but because they're scared of what help might mean: losing independence, autonomy, and control over their lives.

I've come to know, though, that introducing home care isn't about taking these things away. It's about giving Mum or Dad the support to keep living life on their own terms - to stay independent, safe, supported, and connected – in their own home for as long as possible.

And it gives you and your family peace of mind.

That's the real gift of home care.

And together, Melissa Levi and Mable will help you take this next step with confidence, clarity and calm.

Four ways to introduce home care successfully

1 The “Let’s Make Life Easier” approach

Best for parents who pride themselves on independence but are starting to feel the strain.

What to say:

> “Mum, I can see how much effort it takes to keep everything running at home. You do an amazing job, but it’s okay to share the load. What if we had someone come just once a week to help with a few things – the heavy lifting, the cleaning, the errands – so you can save your energy for the things you enjoy, like being with the grandkids?”
>
> “Dad, you’ve earned the right to put your feet up once in a while. How about we get someone in to do the boring stuff – the vacuuming, the laundry – and you keep the good jobs, like the crossword and going to lawn bowls?”

Why it works: It reframes care as an upgrade to independence, not a sign of decline.

If they resist:

> “It’s not about needing help. It’s simply about making life a little easier. Think of it as support, not surrender.”

2 The “Trial Run” approach

Best for parents who may be hesitant or sceptical of home care.

What to say:

> “Dad, I know you’re not sure about this idea, and that’s fair. What if we try it for two weeks? If you don’t like it, we’ll stop. No pressure.”

Then make it concrete:

> “Let’s just have someone come on Mondays to help with shopping and mowing the lawn – nothing more.”

Why it works: It gives Mum or Dad control and reduces fear of permanence.

Once they experience a kind, competent support worker, resistance often melts away.

Bonus tip: Start with an activity that Mum or Dad either values (e.g. gardening, organising the kitchen cupboards, etc.) or doesn't enjoy doing (e.g. laundry, vacuuming).

3 The "Your Doctor Recommended It" approach

Best for parents who respond well to authority or expertise.

What to say:

> "Dr [NAME] mentioned it could be helpful to have a bit of extra support at home – just small things to keep you well and independent. It's part of staying on top of your health."

Why it works: It removes family tension by shifting the idea from your suggestion to a professional recommendation.

Bonus Tip: Discuss the need for home care with Mum or Dad's GP, and have the GP raise it with Mum or Dad.

4 The "For Us, Not Just for You" approach

Best for families where Mum or Dad worry about burdening their kids.

What to say:

> "Mum, you know I love helping – but between work, the kids, and everything else, I sometimes worry I'm not keeping up. If we bring in a bit of help, it means we can spend more time just being together, not always doing chores."

Why it works: It shows home care is an act of love for the whole family.

Top tips for making home care work

1. Start small

Begin with one task that Mum or Dad would value help with (e.g. transport to medical appointments, grocery shopping, cleaning, gardening, errands, etc.) or one short social visit per week. Let Mum or Dad adjust slowly.

2. Keep them involved

Involve Mum or Dad in choosing their home care provider or support workers to build trust. Through Mable, Mum or Dad can view support worker profiles and interview the people they connect with.

3. Focus on fit, not just function

A warm personality match matters just as much as skill. The right person can feel more like a friendly neighbour than a “carer”.

4. Set clear routines

Agree on what days and activities work best, and keep consistency. Routine builds comfort and confidence.

5. Celebrate the wins

After a few visits, gently highlight what’s working:

> “Isn’t it nice to have the fridge stocked with delicious food again?”
>
> “I noticed you’ve had more energy this week! I’m so glad we made this change.”

Positive reinforcement helps Mum or Dad see the benefits.

What to do if Mum or Dad keeps saying “No”

Sometimes, even with your best efforts, resistance continues. Don’t lose hope. In my experience, this can change with time.

Try these gentle strategies:

1. Listen first

> “I get it. You’ve always done everything yourself, and having someone new in the house can feel strange. What part worries you most?”

Often, it’s about privacy, pride, or fear of losing control. Listening helps you target the real issue.

2. Use empathy and time

> “You’ve always been so independent. I’d probably feel the same way you do, right now. Let’s park it for now and revisit in a few weeks.”

People adjust more easily when they feel respected rather than pressured.

3. Reframe the role

> “Dad, it’s not a nurse or carer, think of it more like a helper, like when we used to have a cleaner. They’re there to make life easier, not to take over. You’re still very much the boss!”

4. Introduce gradually

Start with something neutral, such as gardening, driving, or meal preparation, rather than personal care (even if that’s where Mum or Dad really need help). Once trust is built, support can grow naturally.

A final word

Remember, introducing home care can feel messy, emotional, and uncomfortable at first. But every small step you take –every conversation, every trial run – is moving your family toward more independence, safety, and peace of mind.

You don't have to figure this all out alone.

With Melissa Levi, you'll have the knowledge, strategies, language, and steady support to guide your family through whatever comes next.

And with Mable, you can find trusted, flexible home support that fits Mum or Dad's life perfectly.

You've got this — and we've got you.



Melissa Levi - Clinical Psychologist

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