

# Conversation Planner:

*How can I have good conversations about not driving?*

You want your conversations with the person with dementia to be positive, progressive and productive. You can use these points to guide those conversations.

**Who** should be the messenger? The person who answers “yes” to these questions may be in the most favorable position. Is it you or someone else? If it’s not you, you may need to have a preliminary conversation with the person in the most favorable position to take action.

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| Is the driver your spouse or your parent?                  | Yes___ No___ |
| Do you have the person’s best interests in mind?           | Yes___ No___ |
| Do you know the person’s physical and cognitive condition? | Yes___ No___ |
| Do you know the person’s driving abilities?                | Yes___ No___ |
| Do you have a good relationship with the person?           | Yes___ No___ |

**When** is a good time to talk? It’s never too early to talk about driving issues, but these conversations warrant careful attention, pre-planning and serious discussion. Here are some good opportunities to start a conversation naturally.

- Change in frequency or severity of warning signs
- Change in health, medication or cognitive status
- Change in financial situation or vehicle ownership

**What** do you want your conversation to accomplish? Keep your conversations simple, short and direct. Focus on one or two key points at a time. Here are some appropriate topics with some sample conversation starters. Which of these topics do you need to discuss?

- \_\_\_ Family’s willingness to help. “When you go to the grocery store, can I go? Or instead, let me drive.” “We’re willing to drive, but you have to let us.”
- \_\_\_ Transportation needs and alternatives. “The mall is having a sale. What if I pick you up at 10?”
- \_\_\_ Observations of warning signs. “How did those scrapes get on your car? They may mean that there could be a problem judging distances. What do you think?” “We need to talk to your doctor about this.”

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\_\_\_ Planning alternative transportation. “The van driver said he would make sure you got to your appointment on time.”

\_\_\_ Potential risks to self or others. “I know you think you’re okay driving. But you always said, ‘Better safe than sorry.’”

\_\_\_ Need to stop driving. “We don’t feel safe when you drive.” “I would feel awful if something terrible happened to you or someone else on the road.”

\_\_\_ Getting support from others. “I’ve noticed changes in his driving. Could you ride with him and see what you think?” “Can we take turns taking her to the grocery store?” “She needs to hear this from more than just me.”

\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Personal Conversation Plan.** What is your next conversation strategy? With whom will you talk? When? What do you hope to accomplish from the conversation?