

When Is It Time to Stop Driving? Conversation Guide

Prepare with care · listen with respect · plan the next step

A practical caregiver guide for talking about driving concerns, protecting everyday independence, and deciding what to do next.

A free resource from

The Caregiving Concierge™

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Prepare · notice · listen

Prepare for a conversation, not a verdict.

Age alone does not determine when someone should stop driving. Use this guide to organize concerns, listen, and plan support—not to make a medical or licensing decision. [1,2]

THIS CONVERSATION IS FOR (NAME)

PRIMARY CAREGIVER

DATE

WHO WILL JOIN THE CONVERSATION?

1 GATHER FACTS, NOT LABELS [1,2]

- [ ] Bring dated examples of what changed, including any recent serious event.
- [ ] Separate what you saw from what another person reported.
- [ ] Ask how driving feels to them; focus on ability rather than age.

ONE SPECIFIC EXAMPLE: WHEN, WHERE, AND WHAT HAPPENED

2 MAKE ROOM FOR THEIR PRIORITIES [1,2]

- [ ] Choose a quiet time off the road and a trusted person to begin.
- [ ] Ask which trips they most want to protect; check a realistic ride option.

WHAT MATTERS MOST TO THEM / A RIDE OPTION TO CHECK

3 PREPARE YOUR OPENING [1,2]

Sample wording to adapt:

"I'd like to talk about the drive on ____. I noticed ____, and it worried me. How did it feel to you? Let's work out the safest next step together."

MY OPENING WORDS

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4 KEEP THE CONVERSATION RESPECTFUL [1,2]

- [ ] Listen for fears about dependence or losing valued routines; acknowledge them before offering solutions.

Sample responses—not a script you have to follow:

“You’re taking away my freedom.”

“Being able to go where you choose matters. Let’s start with the trips you do not want to lose.”

“I’m a good driver.”

“I know driving matters to you. I’m worried about what happened on ____. Could we get help understanding that change?”

“I won’t talk about this.”

“We can take a break. I’d like us to return to this on ____ so we can make a plan.” A pause must not leave an immediate danger unaddressed.

THEIR MAIN CONCERN / WHAT THEY WOULD LIKE HELP WITH

5 ASK FOR THE RIGHT HELP [1–3]

- [ ] Which health or medication changes should the clinician review?
- [ ] Would a driving rehabilitation specialist’s assessment be useful?
- [ ] What should we do about driving and rides while concerns are reviewed?
- [ ] Where can we confirm current state licensing or reporting requirements?

PROFESSIONAL TO CONTACT / PHONE

If concerns remain: Contact the healthcare team or a driving specialist rather than trying to settle fitness to drive yourself. Do not arrange an informal test drive to prove a point. For an immediate danger, prioritize a safe alternative; call 911 for an emergency. [1–3]

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Plan rides · assign steps · follow up

6 KEEP EVERYDAY LIFE MOVING [1,4]

Include social trips, not only appointments. Before relying on a ride, confirm availability, cost, accessibility, and any help needed getting in or out.

TRIP / PRIORITY	RIDE OPTION / CONTACT	BACKUP / QUESTIONS

7 AGREE ON A NEXT STEP & REVIEW DATE [1]

Record the next action, who will handle it, and when to check back. Write “not yet agreed” when a decision still needs discussion or professional input.

NEXT ACTION	WHO	BY WHEN	FOLLOW-UP

NEXT CONVERSATION / REVIEW DATE

Important: This guide is not a driving evaluation or permission to keep driving. Follow individualized professional guidance and current licensing rules. [1–4]

You do not need all the answers today. Aim for a clear next step, a workable ride, and support for the person—not just a decision about the keys.

Everything about your loved one's care, organized in one place.

The Caregiving Concierge™ helps families organize appointments, providers, medications, documents, schedules, transportation details, and other important care information in one secure workspace.

Sources informing this resource · Sample wording and worksheets by TCC
[1] NHTSA — How to Understand and Influence Older Drivers
[2] National Institute on Aging — Safe Driving for Older Adults
[3] AOTA — Driving & Community Mobility Toolkit for Professionals
[4] AOTA — Driving & Community Mobility