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8 Tips for Having “The Talk” With Elderly Parents

- and/or accountant
- Insurance brokers
- Minister of religion
- Closest friends

3. Address the Topic of a Will

Determine whether there is an existing will in place and whether the document is up to date. If a will was created more than 5 years ago, check to see if your parent/s would consider reviewing it to ensure it's a true reflection of their wishes. Establish where they keep the document and confirm who they've appointed as the executor/s. The same goes for any trust that may have been created.

4. Talk About Power of Attorney

Find out whether your parent/s have appointed someone to manage their financial and other affairs if they become incapacitated. If they haven't given someone power of attorney, suggest they consider doing so.

5. Discuss End-of-Life Wishes

Even though the subject may be uncomfortable to talk

about, you should discuss end-of-life wishes with your parent/s. Their estate plan will be incomplete without these directives, so it's important to include them. The form those directives take in Pennsylvania include:

- The appointment of a health care proxy who can make medical decisions for your parent/s if they become incapable of making those decisions themselves. You should obtain the relevant forms from an elder law attorney.
- A medical or advance directive that explains what sort of care they would like and whether life support should be used to keep them alive or not. These directives can be included in the document that appoints the health care proxy. The directive must refer to the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) when naming the proxy
- A living will contains instructions regarding the withdrawal or termination of life support under

specific conditions, such as your parent/s becoming terminally ill, becoming comatose, or entering a vegetative state

- Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST), which provides more explicit directives regarding the type of treatment your parent/s would or would not want.

6. Ask About Insurance Policies

Talk about the type of insurance policies in place. These include:

- Health insurance – Medicare or private
- Life insurance
- Home insurance
- Long-term care insurance
- Disability insurance

In some cases, there may be seniors funeral insurance or other policies intended to cover funeral or burial payments. You'll need to know about these too and have all the details.

If you have not already done so, take note of the names and contact details of the insurance brokers. Check

where the policy documents are kept and, if possible, make certified copies of them.

7. Request Access to Tax Returns

It can be helpful to know where tax return paperwork is stored. While these documents may not be necessary after death, they could be required if the estate becomes complicated. Confirm where you can find these documents and that they are all up to date.

8. Discuss All Other Practicalities

In addition to subjects such as power of attorney and insurance, there are several other practicalities you should include in your conversations.

- Make a list of their accounts—financial accounts such as bank and mutual fund, credit accounts, and store accounts.
- Check whether they are registered organ donors or whether they would consider donating their organs.
- Talk about the memorial service they want and whether they want to be buried, cremated, or some other option.

Conclusion

Estate planning conversations are tough no matter how you tackle them. Try your best to be patient with your parent/s and transparent with other family members about what you are doing. If you have siblings, invite them to be part of the conversation.

Accept that these talks can take time and avoid placing pressure on those involved to get it all done in a few hours. The smaller details are critical and should not be rushed. Lastly, always consult an attorney if you're unsure about the legal aspects or implications of any of the points mentioned above.

Contact us, Shober & Rock, PC, elder law attorneys at (215) 345-4301 to discuss the needs of your parent/s.

Talking about estate planning is a difficult, emotional topic, but it's essential for every family.

Unless you are certain your parents have an up-to-date will and a wider plan for what should happen if they get sick or pass away, you shouldn't assume everything will be taken care of.

According to a 2017 survey, less than half of Americans have a will. If your mother or father dies intestate—meaning without a will—such a situation could lead to added emotional strain and stress. And it could have financial implications for all their children and/or other family members.

The following 8 tips can help you discuss the hard topics thoroughly and respectfully and prepare you for the road ahead.

1. Plan What You Can

Discussing estate planning and all it entails is not something that should happen without any planning. Make a list of topics and questions and then let your parent/s know what you want to chat about.

If possible, set a time and date and choose a private venue that everyone will feel comfortable in. Be aware that you may need to schedule a few conversations since there could be too much to cover in one sitting. Remember to use language that is respectful and supportive and to take a breather if emotions run high or the stress becomes overwhelming.

2. Identify Key People

There are several key people you may need to contact for estate planning purposes. Ask your parent/s for the names and contact details of their:

- Doctors
- Attorney
- Financial planner

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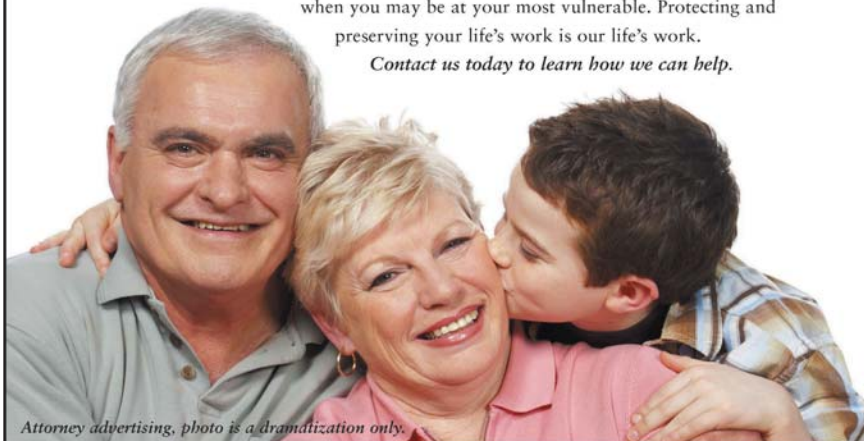
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The attorneys of Shober & Rock have years of experience helping individuals and families with the complex issues of elder law. We are here to help you prepare for and confront what may be the most complex legal hurdles of your life at a time when you may be at your most vulnerable. Protecting and preserving your life's work is our life's work.

Contact us today to learn how we can help.



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