

Having Conversations with Someone Who Is Having Driving Problems

If you have noticed that a friend or family member shows some of the warning signs of unsafe driving, it means it is time to talk with them. Discussions about driving issues can be difficult and emotional. The conversations may need to be conducted in a sensitive and thoughtful manner.

It is useful to think of these discussions in three parts. **First**, how do you approach the conversations? **Second**, what kinds of topics or information should you discuss? **Third**, who is the best person to have the conversation with the driver?

How To Approach the Conversations



Consider the meaning of driving and its significance to the driver. For many, driving is more than just a mode of transportation; it is symbolic of his or her identity, freedom, or independence.



Do not just have *one* conversation. Have several conversations over a period of time. Be persistent and do not feel guilty about mentioning the topic multiple times.



Before having the conversations, be sure you have observed the driver over time. Write down the abilities the driver still possesses.



To begin the conversations, first pick someone in the family or community whom the driver knows and trusts. This is usually a spouse, an adult child, or the family doctor.



Ask the driver if a doctor has reviewed a medical condition or medications to determine if they have any effects on his or her driving.



Ask for the help of someone who has recently stopped driving and has found other ways to get around. You may need to ask a friend if he or she knows such a person.








Have conversations before driving becomes a problem.

If you are concerned about a loved one's driving and need additional resources to help you plan these conversations, visit www.aarp.org/weneedtotalk.

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What You Could Tell Someone Who Has Driving Problems

-  Start conversations with your concern for the person's overall well-being and use "I" rather than "you" messages: "I'm concerned about your safety while driving since your surgery ... is there anything I can do to help until you are feeling better?" It is not good to say "You're no longer a safe driver."
-  Try to let the person preserve his or her self-respect. Listen honestly to the person's viewpoint and reasoning and always show compassion.
-  Be supportive of any changes the driver has already made, such as reducing the number of trips he or she makes or limiting night driving.
-  Explain the availability of other transportation methods such as family, friends, neighbors, taxis, public and other transportation services, as well as their benefits (safer, less expensive and less trouble than maintaining a car).
-  Ask the person to consider having a formal assessment done by an occupational therapist, who is also a trained driver rehabilitation specialist.

If a person with serious driving deficiencies does not respond to any of these efforts, you may have to report the person to the state's department of motor vehicles as a last resort. Not all states maintain the confidentiality of those reporting. If it is important to you that your report remains confidential, first check with your state's motor vehicle department or bureau for details.

Select your state on the on-line map to see if there is any state-specific information for your state. You can use this section to make note of what you find for your state.
