

Personal values and wishes determine housing choices, but safety and health risks, ability of family members to offer support and availability of community resources can impact choice when housing needs change.

Housing needs in later life fit along a continuum of changes from no need for assistance to a need for full time care.

A person's own history, values and wishes should be the center of conversations about changes in housing needs.

Rebecca Blocker, MS, HHS
University of Missouri Extension,
Housing & Environmental Design
Specialist, 1. West Liberty, Suite
101, Farmington, MO 63640
E-mail: blockerr@missouri.edu
[www.extension.missouri.edu/
stfrancois](http://www.extension.missouri.edu/stfrancois)

573-756-4539

A Balancing Act:

Beginning a Family Discussion of Housing Needs and Suitability of the Current Home

Before raising housing issues:

First: Investigate and raise **your** awareness of physical changes with aging, housing alternatives, products and available services.

Then: Begin assessing the situation:

1. Learn By Observation

Look for changes within the home.

Is the home clean?

Anything broken?

Laundry and chores done?

2. Learn By Asking Questions

What kinds of things are you having difficulty doing?

Are there things you are no longer doing that you still want to do? Why?

Are there activities that you feel unsafe doing or that you are unable to do?

3. Learn by Listening.

4. Problem solve together.

5. Begin by making small changes.

6. Consult a professional if needed.

An Occupational Therapist can assess the situation and match physical and cognitive abilities to their physical environment.

Questions to begin family housing needs discussion

- ◆ Is anyone's health or safety at risk in the current situation?
- ◆ Are stores, church, doctor, social activities easily reached?
- ◆ Are the neighbors and neighborhood safe and compatible?
- ◆ Does the main level have a full bath and bedroom?
- ◆ What repairs are or will be needed? Are they major or minor?
- ◆ Will regular expenses (utilities, taxes) put a strain on income?
- ◆ What support can family members provide?
- ◆ What kind of help is available from local agencies?