

When Driving Becomes a Concern

HOW TO TALK ABOUT GIVING UP THE KEYS WITH COMPASSION

A compassionate guide for families navigating difficult conversations about driving and safety.



For many older adults, driving represents:



Independence



Freedom



Confidence



Identity



SIGNS IT MAY BE TIME TO TALK



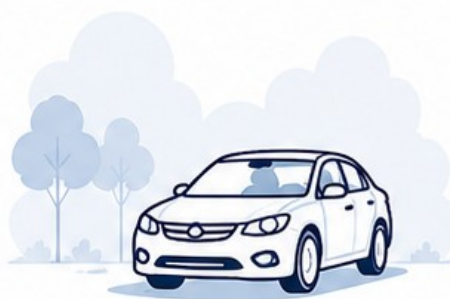
CHANGES IN DRIVING BEHAVIOR

- New dents or scrapes on the car
- Getting lost in familiar areas
- Missing stop signs or signals
- Driving too slowly or hesitating
- Confusion at intersections
- Increased anxiety while driving
- Trouble parking or staying in lanes



CHANGES OUTSIDE THE CAR

- Vision changes
- Slower reaction time
- Memory concerns
- Medication side effects
- Falls or balance issues
- Increased fatigue
- Difficulty managing appointments or daily tasks



REMEMBER

A person may not recognize changes in their own driving ability—and losing the ability to drive can feel like losing independence.

Leading with compassion matters.



Talking about driving is often one of the hardest conversations families face. **Starting early can help avoid rushed decisions after a crisis.**



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Clarity before crisis.



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HOW TO START THE CONVERSATION

Helpful Approaches



Choose a calm time to talk



Focus on safety, not blame



Use “we” instead of “you”



Keep the conversation respectful



Listen more than you speak



Understand this may take multiple conversations

CONVERSATION STARTERS



“I’ve noticed driving seems more stressful lately. How are you feeling about it?”



“I want to make sure you stay safe and continue getting where you want to go.”



“Can we talk about some transportation options that might make things easier?”



WHAT IF THEY REFUSE TO LISTEN?

It’s common for older adults to feel defensive, frustrated, embarrassed, or fearful during conversations about driving. In many cases, the conversation may happen gradually over time — not all at once.

If safety concerns continue, additional support may help.



A DOCTOR CAN HELP

- Discuss medical or cognitive concerns affecting driving
- Review medication side effects
- Recommend vision or driving evaluations
- Encourage safer transportation alternatives

Sometimes hearing concerns from a medical professional feels less personal and easier to accept.



DRIVING EVALUATIONS

Some families find it helpful to involve a driving instructor, occupational therapist, or medical professional to help evaluate driving safety and discuss options.

A neutral third party can sometimes make the conversation feel less personal and less confrontational.



DMV INVOLVEMENT

In Nevada, the DMV may require:

- Vision testing
- Medical documentation
- Driving re-evaluation

Family members, physicians, or others can submit safety concerns to the DMV if driving ability appears unsafe.



The goal is not punishment — it is protecting both the driver and others on the road.



TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES IN NORTHERN NEVADA



FAMILY & CAREGIVER SUPPORT

- Family driving schedules
- Shared ride calendars
- Companion services for errands & appointments



RIDE SHARE & TRANSPORTATION APPS



GoGoGrandparent

A senior-friendly service that helps older adults access Uber and Lyft rides without needing to use a smartphone app.



(855) 464-6872

gogograndparent.com

Other Popular Ride Share Options

Uber | **lyft**

Family members or caregivers can often help schedule rides and transportation.



ADDITIONAL TRANSPORTATION & DRIVING SUPPORT

Some seniors may benefit from:

- Volunteer driver programs
- Senior transportation services
- Older driver refresher courses
- Non-emergency medical transportation
- Community ride assistance

AARP
Driver Safety

Driver safety courses, educational resources, and tools for older drivers and families.

aarp.org/auto/driver-safety



For additional local senior transportation options and community resources, dial **211** or visit nevada211.org.



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WE CAN HELP FAMILIES:

- ✓ Identify safety concerns
- ✓ Explore support options
- ✓ Discuss aging-in-place resources
- ✓ Connect with trusted local resources



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