

3 WAY TO START A CONVERSATION WITH YOUR AGING PARENTS

without conflict or
shutdown



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Redefining Us



WELCOME!

Opening tough conversations with aging parents about health, housing, or future plans can feel overwhelming for everyone involved. Danielle and Stephanie understand that struggle on both a personal and professional level.

Danielle, owner of Your Neighborhood Notaries, supports aging adults and Sandwich Generation families through her notary services. She witnessed the challenges her husband's family faced while caring for his father with dementia for over 7 years, and experienced the ripple effects herself as a new mother during the pandemic. She created this resource to offer the kind of support her family needed, making caregiving feel less overwhelming.

Stephanie, owner of Redefining Us and WellMinded Counseling, has spent years helping people in the Sandwich Generation navigate the emotional toll, relationship strain, and constant demands they face. She created this much-needed resource she wishes more families had access to before burnout sets in.

Together, they've combined lived experience and professional expertise to share three conversation strategies that make starting these important discussions easier, build trust, and ensure everyone feels heard.

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THE “SANDWICH” CONVERSATION METHOD

(Adapted from therapeutic conversation techniques)

Step 1: Start with appreciation — something positive about your relationship or what they’ve done.

Step 2: Gently introduce the concern or topic.

Step 3: Close with reassurance or a reminder of shared goals.

EXAMPLE

“I really appreciate how independent you’ve always been. I’m starting to get a little concerned about how many stairs are in your house. I want to make sure we find options that keep you feeling safe and confident.”

NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION (NVC) STARTER PHRASES

Use this 4-part model to express your feelings without blame.

Observation: State the facts without judgment.

Feeling: Share your emotional response.

Need: Explain what's important to you.

Request: Ask for collaboration.

EXAMPLE

"I noticed you've been skipping some of your doctor appointments. I feel worried about your health. I need to know we're staying on top of your care. Can we work on a plan together?"

“TOP 5 PRIORITIES” EXERCISE

A collaborative activity to guide the conversation:

- Both you and your parent(s) list the five most important things in your lives right now.
- Compare lists to find shared priorities.
- Use these as the starting point for bigger conversations — like housing, health, finances, or emotional well-being.

EXAMPLE

“Let’s each write down the top five things we want to focus on right now. Then we can see where our lists match and talk about how to support each other.”

BONUS: WHEN YOUR PARENTS AVOID OR DISMISS THE CONVERSATION

Even with the best approach, some parents may change the subject, get defensive, or refuse to talk. This is often more about their fear, uncertainty, or sense of loss than about you.

What you can do:

- Stay calm and consistent: Gently return to the topic another day rather than pushing in the moment.
- Acknowledge their feelings: “I understand this is hard to talk about.”
- Keep the door open: Let them know you’ll revisit the conversation when they feel ready.
- Use a written note or email: Sometimes people respond better to written communication because it gives them time to process.
- Bring in a neutral third party: A trusted family friend, counselor, or clergy member can help mediate.

EXAMPLE

“I know this isn’t easy, and I respect that. I just want you to know my goal is to make sure you feel safe and supported. Let’s try again when you’re ready.”

YOUR COMPLETE GUIDE TO THRIVING IN THE SANDWICH GENERATION

You've started the conversation — now let's keep going.

You've taken the first step by downloading this resource. Now, imagine having even more tools, guidance, and real-world strategies at your fingertips to navigate life in the Sandwich Generation.

Our full course dives deeper into the topics you've explored and equips you with a personalized roadmap for caregiving that supports you just as much as your loved ones.

Inside the course, you'll receive:

- Step-by-step conversation guides and printable worksheets
- A deeper dive into boundary-setting with real-life scripts
- Access to expert interviews and case studies
- Resource lists tailored to different caregiving situations and budgets
- Planning templates to prepare for emotional, financial, and medical changes

You don't have to figure it all out alone.

JOIN THE SANDWICH GENERATION COURSE

WANT TO WORK WITH US?



Danielle Brill

If you need a mobile notary in the Denver Metro area

SCHEDULE A MOBILE NOTARY



Stephanie Konter-O'Hara

If you need a therapist to support you as you navigate

SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT