

40 70

*“The 40-70 Rule”
Executive Summary
Canada Survey Results*



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SENIOR CARE


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*I*ndependent research by Home Instead Senior Care® of 500 Canadian Baby Boomers provided new insights into the dynamics of the conversations which do—and do not—take place between Boomers and their aging parents. This first-of-its-kind study revealed obstacles to communication and solutions that would substantially improve communication and the quality of life for both generations.

This telephone study of Boomers aged 45 to 65 years found that Boomers have the most difficulty talking with their parents about independence issues such as leaving home—and that their parents’ desire to remain independent makes it challenging to address such sensitive issues as driving privileges. Baby Boomers in Canada reported several major communication obstacles, including the following: their parents refuse to talk; they feel unprepared to speak to their parents; and continuation of the parent-child roles that emerged during their childhood. An analysis of survey results suggests that these hurdles can best be overcome if “the conversation” begins when the child reaches age 40 years or the parent reaches age 70 years, whichever comes first. This is the new “40-70 Rule.”

The importance of this quality communication between Baby Boomers and their aging parents becomes clear since it directly impacts the seniors’ ability to access resources as assistance becomes necessary. The research also found that communications between adult child and parent are influenced by many factors, including the gender of the child and parent, the topic of conversation, and the distance the child lives from the parent.



KEY FINDINGS

Quantity and Quality of Communication

- Boomers communicate frequently with senior parents by phone and face-to-face: 37% communicate daily with their parents and 30% communicate every couple days.
- A majority of Boomers communicate with their parents most frequently by telephone.
- Most often, Boomers are talking to their parents about topics that could be classified as “everyday things” including family, current events, and work.
- Many Boomers would like to know more about their parents’ personal situations so they can help them if necessary; for example nearly half (46%) would like to know more about their parents’ health.
- Children see themselves—not their parents—as the “conversation starters.” For instance, only 28% of Boomers say their parents are very likely to voluntarily communicate that they have housing needs, such as the need to move to a facility.

Communication

ONLY
28%

Say their parents are very likely to voluntarily communicate housing needs

Communication Influencers

- Boomers have the most difficulty discussing independence issues with their parents: 36% say telling their parents that these older adults have to leave home is the most difficult topic.
- Gender of child plays a role: 59% of female children say they are very comfortable talking to their parents about their parents’ mental health, as compared to just 42% of males.
- Gender of parent plays a role: one in six Boomers with “just fathers alive” say these older men keep to themselves and this makes it difficult to help them.

Gender Influence

42%

59%

MEN

WOMEN

Feel comfortable talking to their parents about their parents’ mental health

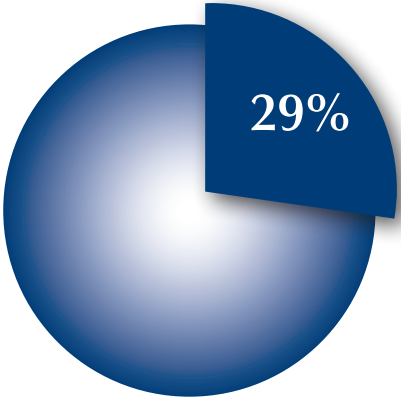
46%

Would like to know more about their parents’ health.



Roadblocks and Solutions

- 22% of Boomers say their parents are too independent and this makes it difficult to address issues such as convincing them to give up their car keys.
- More than one-quarter of Boomers (27%) say their biggest obstacle to communicating with parents about difficult topics is that their parents refuse to talk.
- More than one-quarter of Boomers (29%) say they wish they knew more about their parents' wishes for the future.
- Nearly one in five Boomers use surrogates, such as family members or friends, to communicate to parents about health, financial, housing or care needs.
- As a solution to break the ice, 60% of Boomers recommend involving siblings or other family members and approaching parents together.
- To assist with communication, more than one-third of adult children suggest seeking assistance from outside experts, such as eldercare professionals.



Wish they knew more about their parents' wishes for the future

Roadblocks

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

1,000 telephone interviews were completed in the U.S. (sampling error of +/-3.1 percent at a 95 percent confidence level) and 500 interviews were completed in Canada, excluding Quebec (sampling error of +/-4.4 percent at a 95 percent confidence level). Data analysis was performed by the Boomer Project of Richmond, Virginia: www.boomerproject.com.

27%

of Boomers say their biggest obstacle to communicating with their parents is their parents' refusal to talk.