

# BOOMER BEAT

...For Those of Us Still Groovin'

## 10 Tell-Tale Signs Your Aging Parents Can't Live Alone

BY CAROLYN BRENT

**W**ith an estimated 13 million baby boomers throughout the U.S. caring for elderly parents, throngs of adult caregivers struggle with determining if their parent is fit to remain living alone.

Here are 10 tell-tale signs that can give you peace of mind making this all-important decision:

**1. Mom or Dad has always been a great housekeeper, but the house just doesn't look like it used to:** Ask your parent if help is needed with the clutter, but do it in a nonchalant way that could prompt a conversation indicating assistance is needed here.

**2. The bills and other mail are piling up:** Basic tasks that were often dealt with quickly and easily when younger, but that are now falling by the wayside, are signs that your older parent could be getting overwhelmed and not able to manage daily affairs.

**3. The checking account balance is wrong and bills are going unpaid:** You may also discover amongst mail issues that your parent's checking account ledger balance is wrong or in arrears. These are also signs that your parent is having memory issues or difficulty with simple math cognition.

**4. Your parent is losing a lot of weight:** A parent who may have lost their partner or who is generally depressed often loses interest in

eating due to a reduced appetite.

**5. They have forgotten the basics of hygiene:**

If you notice that your parents are wearing the same clothing day in and day out or that their hair or skin appears dirty on a fairly regular basis, they may have lost the motivation, ability and/or forethought to look after themselves.

**6. They appear in inappropriate clothing:**

There is cause for concern if your parent dons summer clothing in the dead of winter or leaves the house in a nightgown and slippers.

**7. There are signs of forgetfulness in the home:**

All too often there are stories of older people who accidentally burned their houses down or have flooded the home due to forgetting.

**8. Your parent regularly misses appointments and other important items:**

Forgetfulness, absentmindedness and memory issues may also show up when it comes to keeping certain appointments, recognizing key dates or taking meds.

**9. They are just acting plain weird:**

If you see signs of paranoia, fear, strange phone calls and conversations and nervousness, these should not be overlooked.

**10. They exhibit signs of depression:**

A loss of interest in caring for oneself as well as a lack of participation in socialization and in once-loved hobbies can mean that your parent needs treat-



ment or should reside in an environment where they can be around other people.

Carolyn A. Brent is the author of *Why Wait? The Baby Boomers' Guide to Preparing Emotionally, Financially & Legally for a Parents' Death*. She may be reached at [CareGiverStory.com](http://CareGiverStory.com).

