



## When Family Members Encounter Conflict About a Senior's Home Sale

The journey of assisting a senior through a home sale is fairly straightforward. Even with the many steps, the stress, the packing of belongings, and the transition into retirement care, it is a process that can be planned and carried out successfully.

Complications of the sale can be caused by the condition of the home, or the seniors' health or financial needs. But the majority of obstacles that delay, prevent, or **turn a senior's home sale upside down** are often caused by the senior's family. To elder care professionals, family is the "wild card" of working with seniors: unpredictable, sometimes frustrating, and other times very positive. Unfortunately, family can be the one factor preventing a senior from moving to a safer, healthier environment, even when the senior wishes to do so.

Consider Bert, whose home was being held up by a tree stump in the basement. The house was slowly caving inwards. It had a giant gaping hole in the kitchen ceiling, and it was not safe to live here. Bert wanted to move, but his daughter, who wanted to inherit the house when he passed away, kept Realtors® far from him with aggressive threats.

Another example is Mrs. Ellington, who lived in a massive colonial home. She had purchased a condominium so that she could sell her home and downsize to a simpler life. Her grandson, a recently minted PhD who lived in a tented corner of her basement, prevented the sale so that he could continue his low-cost living arrangement there.

There are seniors who have warring factions in their family, who are unable to agree even while the senior declines in health. We've seen adult sons try to "remodel" their parents' home, costing months of lost time and thousands of dollars, and creating an un-sellable home. We even assisted a senior whose homeless daughter pitched a tent in the yard, and was using drugs there all the way to the closing date of the home sale.

Families are all unique, and the quirky stories could fill volumes. However, one theme remains the same in SASH's service to seniors. We encourage families to put aside differences, personal motives, individual needs, and **focus on the well-being of their senior loved one** in what could be the final months or years of his or her life. If you are struggling through a similarly frustrating situation, these questions might help:

1. Where and how will the senior loved one receive the best care?
2. Does the sale of the home enable this care to take place for the senior?
3. What can the family do to rally around the senior for the best outcome?

If conflict is unresolved, consider hiring a social worker in gerontology, a geriatric care manager, or another elder care professional who is experienced in navigating a family through the decisions of the senior's care. In the end, what matters most is what leads to the senior's health, happiness, and well-being.

SASH's Coaching Services can assist your family through this very important life step of the senior's home sale. Call us to find out how!

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