Talking With Your Loved One About The Campfire Program

A new program can feel unfamiliar. Start by listening to your loved one and connecting Campfire to what matters to them. The aim is to help them explore support while keeping their preferences central.

Begin with their concerns
Choose a calm, unhurried time. Ask what they think about attending and listen before offering solutions. Concerns may include meeting new people, being away from home or feeling that accepting support means losing independence.
You could say: “What would make you feel comfortable visiting?” or “What worries you most about going?”

Connect The Campfire Program to their interests
Talk about an activity or service they may enjoy or find helpful. Ask staff what is currently available. Explain that Campfire is a community program designed to support people living at home and provide support for caregivers.
You could say: “Would you like us to ask what activities they offer? We could look for something you enjoy.”

Take one small step
Ask the Campfire team about an introductory visit or a gradual start, if appropriate. A familiar person may help them feel comfortable. Attendance and services are arranged following assessment, based on the person’s needs and program capability.
You could say: “Would you be willing to meet the staff with me? We can ask questions and talk about how you feel afterward.”

If they are reluctant
Acknowledge their feelings. Ask whether a particular concern could be addressed. Avoid arguing, repeated pressure or describing attendance as punishment. Ask permission to revisit the conversation later. A trusted clinician or friend may help explain the benefits with their agreement.

When memory or understanding is affected
Use short sentences and one idea at a time. Explain the next step clearly and allow time to respond. Offer simple choices. Describe the program honestly; do not promise a job or volunteer role unless one actually exists. Share interests, routines and worries with staff to help plan a welcoming introduction.

Questions and support
Campfire: 613-584-3333 ext. 4100 | communityintake@drdh.org
Ontario Caregiver Helpline: 1-833-416-2273. Free, confidential information and referrals, available by phone 24/7.
Further reading: Alzheimer Society Day Program Tips • Dementia Communication Tips • Caregiver Helpline