

# Transition Tips for Moving to a Senior Residence

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You have visited multiple communities, weighed your options, and have chosen the best lifestyle and care option for yourself or your loved one. Now what?

A successful transition starts with preparation, a positive attitude, and a supportive social and family network.

- 1) **Make a list** of what will need to be done, such as who will be responsible for packing, hiring the movers, cleaning the house, decorating the new home, and completing any required paperwork for the community. Create a timeline so your bases are covered on moving day and after. Make sure you include your loved ones in these conversations, stay upbeat, and focus on what life will be like without all of the current worries that led you to this choice.
- 2) **Put your legal matters in order.** Who will be making the financial and health care decisions? Hopefully this has already been addressed, if not now is the time to start. Involve and get the advice from your physician, attorney and loved ones when navigating this. Legal issues such as Powers of Attorney for health care and finances, advanced directives for health care, and do not resuscitate (DNR) orders need to be discussed.
- 3) **Keep your thoughts and discussions on the positive change** that is coming, and the enhancement of the social, physical and psychological well-being for you and your loved ones. Maintain contact with the new community. Visit to dine or join in on activities you enjoy to meet other residents, so you see some familiar faces when you move. Touch base and review the move-in checklist with your community liaison helping you facilitate the move.

- 4) **Meet with the Executive Director** to review your lease or residency agreement prior to move-in day if possible. It is important that you have all of your questions answered, such as utilities, meal times, housekeeping and laundry days, and “Who do I ask for help?” It is nice if you meet the service and care staff before you move in so they are more familiar with you, and you them when you arrive. Ask if there is a Welcome Committee to assist you during your first few days, so you can get used to the new routines.
- 5) **Make your apartment feel like home!** Hang pictures, shelves, and window treatments. Choose your favorite pieces of furniture, bedding, and accessorize your new home so it feels like your place of refuge. Involve your loved ones as much as possible with the selection process when preparing the move: a stack of sticky notes works great to identify the pieces to bring. A professional moving and transition company can actually take care of this for you if you need assistance. Work together to have the apartment set up before you or your loved one spends their first night. Remember this is a process. With each interaction, you become more familiar and comfortable with this change.

Transitions to senior communities can take up to 3 to 6 months depending on your personality, so be patient with yourself and others while adjusting to this change. Remember there is a learning curve for everyone involved, so ask questions, talk about how you are feeling, and involve your family as much as possible. Frequent contact, through phone calls, letters, cards and personal visits from family and friends will also help you stay connected. Invite your friends to visit your new home and host them for a dinner or luncheon after you have settled in. It takes time, but once you are settled in, you will probably wish you had made the move a few years ago!