

Helpful advice for a transition to a senior living community



By Matt Del Vecchio
The Suburban

More people are transitioning to senior living communities than ever before. Our aging population; longer life expectancies; the desire for social engagement; and an improved perception of senior living are just some of the leading factors contributing to this trend. Operators are also adapting to the evolving needs and demands of clients, making it more attractive to make a move.

Just the thought of transitioning can be overwhelming for some people. While others anxiously look forward to moving into a senior living community. Here are measures that can be implemented to make the transition as smooth as possible.

Where to go

The search for an ideal retirement home or long-term care residence can take time and effort. Many questions need to be answered. They can range from the type of care required, geography, budget, type of apartment, culture, environment, activities, safety,



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security, meals, and amenities. Are you looking for Independent Living, Assisted Living or Long-Term Care? You may want to begin your search online to gather basic information.

Talk to friends and colleagues that have already made the move. However, nothing beats a tour of the senior living community. Stay for lunch to sample the food and to get a better feel for the environment of the residence. You may also want to reach out to a professional housing counsellor that can provide proper guidance and support throughout the search and tour process. Their services are typically provided at no charge.

Downsizing process

Once you know where you are going, the moving and downsizing plans can start to take shape. The proactive folks may have already started the downsizing process several years ago. Ask for a floor plan of your upcoming apartment. The hardest choices will be deciding what stays and what goes. It can be a tough, emotional process. However, you may actually find it liberating after all is said and done. Start early. Remember that "less is more."

Take it one room at a time. Decide which items can go with you. Determine what can be passed on to family and friends. Spoiler alert: probably less than what you think. Can anything be sold through an estate sale? Consider online platforms such as Kijiji, eBay, and Facebook Marketplace. Another avenue to get rid of "stuff" is through a good old fashioned garage sale. Once these options have been exhausted, then it is time to consider donations or simply throw it away.

Home sale

The simplest way to reduce stress and anxiety is to move into your chosen senior living community prior to selling your home. If you have the financial ability to cover two to four months of rent without having your property sold, you can be in an ideal situation without having to worry about the constant intrusion of potential buyers; cleaning the house before every visit; and perhaps most importantly, it will reduce the emotional toll of watching people walk through your family house — very often with little respect.

Still feeling overwhelmed about the downsizing and home sale process? Know that there are downsizing companies (usually women owned) and real estate brokers specializing in senior transitions that can make it easier for you to make the move and maximize the value of your home.

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