

SENIOR LIVING

How to overcome the guilt of moving a parent or loved one to a senior residence



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Seniors and Aging

Emotions can run high when moving a parent or loved one to a retirement home or long-term care residence. Oftentimes, the experience can invoke feelings of guilt. While these emotions are not pleasant, it must be realized that they are a common reaction! To focus on keeping the entire process healthy and safe for all involved, it is important to work through these emotions. The following will explain how to overcome the guilt of moving a parent or loved one to a senior residence.

Acknowledge and validate your emotions

Understandably, the person in question may hold some hard feelings about the situation. This does not reduce your guilt. During this time, recognize that you made the best decision for their safety and well-being. Write down a list of the ways they are now in better care and in a safer environment. Keep this paper in an easily visible spot and read it as often as necessary. Ignoring the feeling of guilt or pushing *any* emotion to the side will only cause a more difficult and prolonged journey.

These feelings are a natural reaction to circumstances. Allow yourself to experience them, process them, and move forward.

Focus on the benefits of the senior living community

The catalyst of the matter is that you are prioritizing your parents' or loved ones' well-being. Whether the person in question understands this (or allows themselves to understand it) at the time or not, you must keep it at the forefront of your mind.

The transition will offer social benefits, professional support, increased safety and care, and is likely to enhance your own health and well-being.

Include them in the decision-making process (when possible)

If the situation allows the individual to make informed, rational decisions, allow them to have a say! Speak to them about the possibility of moving to a senior residence and keep an open mind to their concerns. Providing them with the power to make decisions and play an active role will limit experiencing the guilt often associated with the unknown.

Take advantage of opportunities to stay involved

In some cases, transitioning a loved one to a retirement home or long-term care residence may feel like abandonment. This is *not* the case. Once they settle into their new environment, it often opens the opportunity to have an even better relationship with them! For this new stage of life to blossom, it is important to stay involved in their care. Visiting regularly not only eases the transition but also offers peace of mind that they are being taken care of to the best standards.

It's not the end, it's a beginning

Frequent visits and close bonds keep relationships strong. This is simply a new opportunity to create even more happy memories! Plan activities or regular get-togethers to make the most of the time you have with each other. It is good for the soul and will solidify that while many things have changed, your relationship has not.

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