



**Oaks**  
SENIOR LIVING

## Transitioning to a Senior Living Community

Being smart, strong and compassionate

# Transitioning to a Senior Living Community

## Introduction



Life has a certain way of coaching us, beginning in the earliest stages of life. The transition from newborn to infant, infant to toddler, toddler to preschooler, school-aged child to young adult, and young adult to adult, are all well documented and frequently discussed. But what about the little discussed transitions associated with longer lives such as retirement, senior living, and aging in general? You're probably reading this eBook because you or a loved one is in the process of making a lifestyle change that may relate to one of the following examples. Imagine a 75-year old woman named Betty, who is still actively involved in community activities, while also working part time to spoil her grandchildren. Unfortunately, every day she comes home to something new in her house that isn't functioning properly and it's getting harder to manage the upkeep of her home. It is obvious to her friends and family that she'd rather spend time with her community activities than fuss over household tasks. Even the woman's adult daughter starts worrying beyond the norm about her mom living alone. After some time, they decide that living on her own isn't safe. Betty and her daughter begin researching senior care communities that offer independent and assisted living in an attempt to make this next transition as smooth as possible. Or imagine, a woman Stella, living with her husband who is unknowingly suffering from a memory deteriorating condition. After her husband forgets her birthday, their anniversary, and names of grandchildren, she went to a routine meeting with his neurologist. Stella learns at this meeting that there was significant reduction of memory and brain activity in her husband's mind. After many tests and studies, he would be diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, the most common type of dementia. This news was crushing for her, but Stella's love for her husband made her determined to help him every way possible. Although life as they once knew it would never be the same, they vow to stay united through these next steps in his journey of living with Alzheimer's. Whether it's a choice or a need that is prompting you to learn about senior housing and care options, this is a significant turning point in you and your loved one's life. There are many resources available to help you along the way as you explore the options available in your area.



One of life's greatest transitions is the choice to move into a senior living community. It is a crucial decision that should be viewed as the beginning of a new adventure, not the end of a journey. This is a continuation of a meaningful lifestyle and there are six ways to ease into this transition.

## THERE ARE SIX WAYS TO EASE THE TRANSITION.

### 1. STAY POSITIVE

No matter the circumstances, this transition is most likely a little frightening for you. It can be difficult knowing where to start, especially if your loved one is not ready to talk about moving to a senior living community yet. If you're transitioning yourself or a family member, it's helpful to remain positive and understand the benefits that staying upbeat can have on everyone's outlook involved in this transition. Positive emotions have many benefits, such as expanding your focus, improving your social capabilities, and improving your ability to problem-solve. A positive outlook will also encourage increased physical activity, which is key for keeping sharp, alert, and physically able to handle the additional stress of the transition. Positivity increases the ability to learn and adapt to new surroundings and situations, which is important during times of transition, just like this one.

People naturally gravitate towards positive individuals, which increases positive social interaction and happiness.



## 2. RESPECT FEELINGS

Whether a choice or a need is prompting this transition, remember it's natural for your loved one to miss parts of their life prior to the move. You may be moving them from their own home, another state, or alternate living situation. They may be experiencing the loss of a spouse, pet, driver's license, or some of their physical abilities. As their family member, you are also experiencing your own emotions associated with the upcoming transition. No matter how much positivity is infused into the situation, it is important that everyone's emotions be acknowledged. Recognize that their feelings of loss are significant and let your loved one (and yourself) know that it's okay to feel sad, scared, or guilty. This can actually help you release these feelings and embrace positive thoughts moving forward. As you ease into the transition, know that the caregivers located at each Oaks Senior Living community are fully trained to fulfill the specific needs of your loved ones, even if all they need is a hug! They are a terrific source of ongoing support for family members.

## 3. UNDERSTANDING YOUR FINANCIAL OPTIONS

Understanding the ways to pay for senior living is key to managing expenses and preserving financial longevity.

Paying for senior living is often a potential deterrent to making this transition. Many people are shocked when they first learn about the costs associated with living in a retirement community, especially if Assisted Living or Memory Care services are also needed. Transitioning from owning a home to renting an apartment can also be a difficult idea to embrace. The staff at Oaks Senior Living communities know that understanding financial options is an important part of the decision making process. They are committed to providing details up-front and the necessary resources for you to understand the financial options available to you. Even if a loved one is on a fixed income, there are always options available to explore. One of the main benefits of moving to a senior living community is that the amenities most people pay for separately when living in their own home are often included in a monthly rental fee. When comparing the costs of living in a retirement community versus in your own home, many people are pleasantly surprised at the affordability and value of a senior living community.



## 4. CHOOSE THE RIGHT COMMUNITY

Actively involving your loved ones in the selection of a senior living community will help them take ownership of the transition. Since they are the ones moving to a new home, allowing them to feel empowered in this transition will make it go far smoother. Before visiting a community, have a conversation with your loved ones and ask questions to get them envisioning what it's like living in a senior community. Questions about their favorite activities, their transportation needs/options, their health and wellness, and safety are all good ways to start this dialogue.

Finding the community that has the balance of what's important to you and them is key to making everyone happy and feeling good about the decision. The next step in selecting the right community is to search for local communities in the desired geographical area that meet both your preferences and requirements. Communities, like Oaks Senior Living, offer you the convenient option to schedule a tour directly from their website.

The following tips will help you determine if this is a community to introduce to your loved one. How does the building smell and feel when you first enter? How active are staff members with their residents? Are you introduced to people? Does the community feel hospitable and warm? Could you envision your loved one living there? Is the staff able to meet all of your loved one's needs? Asking these questions will help to ensure that it's a right fit for your loved one!

Finding the community that has the balance of what's important to you and what's important to them is key to making everyone happy and feeling good about the decision!



## 5. DOWNSIZING THEIR CHERISHED BELONGINGS

After a community has been selected and a move-in date set, it is time to discuss what items they will take to their new home. You will most likely find the need to downsize if their new apartment home is smaller than their past living space. Here are a few ideas to help overcome their potential emotional hurdle of parting with cherished belongings. Have them pass on heirlooms to younger generations before they move. Knowing their belongings are still in the family and seeing first hand how their family is enjoying these items can help ease the loss of the item. Also, rather than taking the entire set of China to their new apartment, just take one place setting and hang it in a shadow box on the wall. Donating some of their things to a local charity of their choice is another impactful way to part with household items. If they simply cannot part with items, consider investing in a short term storage unit to afford your loved ones time to make hard decisions about their belongings.

## 6. VISIT OFTEN

Frequent visits from familiar faces will significantly help a loved one feel more comfortable at their new residence.

Once your loved one moves into a community, you will feel a lighter burden of stress and worry. Now when you visit, you can actually enjoy time together as family, rather than worrying about their everyday needs. These visits also encourage your loved one to show off their community by introducing you to their new friends and favorite staff member, as well as asking you to participate in activities. Visiting your loved one is also important during the beginning of the transition period to ensure that they are receiving the level of care and attention they need. You'll be able to observe how they are doing, but allowing them to tell you what they like most about their new community is validation that you've made the right decision. The staff at their community will also be proactively communicating with family members and providing regular updates on what's happening in the community. Today's senior living communities have certainly evolved from the stereotypical nursing homes of the past. Oaks Senior Living communities offer a wide range of services, beginning with a highly compassionate approach to Assisted Living, Memory Care, and Respite Care. Oaks Senior Living communities are open, engaging spaces designed to keep residents active and involved in their hobbies and their community, no matter their physical and mental level. With positivity and this newly gained knowledge, this transition can be smooth and something to look forward to!



Visit our website to stay in touch and learn more about senior living options for you and your loved one.

## CONTACT US

✉ DENISE@OAKSSENIORLIVING.COM

☎ (770) 796-5871

🌐 <https://www.oaksseniorliving.com/>



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