



## **Transition Tips**

Transition can be especially hard for seniors. Not only are they nervous about something new, but there is that feeling that they are one step closer to the end. Moving to a new environment can also make them feel like they are losing both their home and their sense of identity. Help your family and yourself by reviewing these ideas on how to simplify the transition process.

### **Prior to beginning your search...**

- Plant the idea of moving early on. Take things slow and get your parent(s) accustomed to the idea. Remember: any kind of change can be horribly scary.
- Promote open communication and positive dialog. Talk about how the move may promote more independence without the maintenance of a big house. Also talk about the opportunity for increased involvement in activities with other people.
- Most importantly, be prepared. Plan ahead. Don't wait for a crisis to hit. If there is a broken hip, a car accident, a medication overdose, or some other emergency that forces you to rush the decision, it will be substantially more traumatic than it needs to be.

### **While you are searching...**

- Choose a community that reflects and meets the social and physical needs of your family member.
- Let your family member be involved with as much of the process as possible. Avoid making them feel like they've lost control. The more input they have in the process - from the choice of facility to furniture arrangement - the more easily they will adjust to their new home.

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**Transition Tips (Continued)**

### **After you have made your selection...**

- Don't rush the move. Reduce the tension by having the whole family come together and work through the downsizing process. Allow and encourage your parent to say good-bye to the old, and have the whole family encourage them to look forward to the new.
- Let the professionals who work in these communities assist you. They should be very willing to help you with the transition process, and they know how to deal with it. Have a member of the facility establish a relationship with your parent by "dropping by to visit because they are in the neighborhood." Then take your parent to visit "that nice person" when you are out and about. That way they can see the home in a non-threatening way.
- Create a sense of belonging by visiting prior to moving. Engage in a meal-time visit, or in an activity.
- Ease your parent into the move by going with them on an outing or activity hosted by the facility. Your presence may help to soothe some of those "first time" insecurities.
- Make an effort to find another resident who shares similar interests or background. Make an introduction, so that they know at least one person to chat with during meals or activities.
- Place favorite treasures (furniture, pictures, mementoes) in the new environment to evoke a sense of home.
- Find opportunities for your parent to get involved and feel needed. Check with the facility for available volunteer opportunities. (Ex: bingo, serving lunch or playing the piano.)

