



Tips for Making an Assisted Living Community Feel Like Home

As the ones we love age and their health begins to decline, it may become necessary to consider moving them to an assisted living community. While this is a natural step in aging, you may face a significant amount of reluctance from your loved one. They may be angry and hurt, at first, at the thought of leaving their home to move to somewhere unfamiliar, but in time they may find that home is a feeling – not a place.

How to Make a Loved One's Assisted Living Community Feel like Home

1. **Make it look like home.** You can help to ease loved ones into the new environment by making it look like their old home. Be sure that they have their favorite furniture and try to find curtains the same color as the curtains in their old house. Bring the bedspread they previously had. Take pictures they had hung and hang them in the same pattern that they were hung before. Even the smallest touches can make it feel like home.
2. **Decorate!** Ask them what they want to bring to the assisted living community. This can help to make them feel as though they still hold control and have a connection to their past. Perhaps your loved one doesn't want to bring anything from home and prefers to buy new furniture and redecorate. If this is what they want to do, let them do it. Give them the opportunity to truly make this space theirs. Make sure to keep some of the old items just in case they end up wanting something back.
3. **Find ways to keep their routine the same.** When your loved one lived at home, what were some things they used to do? Did they host book clubs? Did they have coffee with friends and neighbors? Did they enjoy playing cards? Encourage loved ones to keep doing these things. To make it easier, buy them some new books that might make them want to keep hosting book clubs. Make sure they have a coffee set available and within reach anytime a neighbor may stop over. Stock them up with playing cards or board games they love. It may encourage them to continue the tradition and help them to begin to socialize with their neighbors and make new friends.
4. **Have your loved one's friends visit.** If your loved one is concerned that they will lose friends by moving, arrange for them to visit periodically. Either take your loved one out to meet their friend or surprise your loved one by bringing their friend to them. This seemingly small act can be one of the best housewarming presents they will get!
5. **Get your loved one involved.** If the hobbies or activities your loved one enjoys participating in have corresponding clubs at the assisted living community, encourage them to join. If your loved one gardened often at home and there is a gardening club, take them to a meeting. Maybe your loved one could even grow the plants they used to at home. Getting their hands dirty and jumping into the activities they did in the past can help them to feel as if they really are home.

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- 6. Visit them often.** Be sure to help your loved one the day of the move. Help them to put items where they want them, stay and visit with them. It can help to invite neighbors over for coffee to introduce your loved one and help them to begin to talk to others. Be sure to not smother your loved one, though. You want to make it feel comfortable, but you don't want to hinder them from making new friends and making a new home of their own.

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