



Tips on Easing the Transition to Assisted Living

As our loved ones age, it can become harder and harder for them to live independently at home. Their needs change and the amount of care they need increases. When it comes time to talk to your loved ones about Assisted Living, you may be met with unwillingness and hesitation. This change is hard, but it doesn't have to be. There are many things you can do to help ease the transition for your loved one. Because change is so hard for our loved ones, we need to take into consideration what we can do to help make our loved ones more comfortable during this transition to an Assisted Living community.

5 Ways to Help Ease the Transition to Assisted Living

1. **Try to be understanding.** When it comes time for your loved ones to make a move, expect some reluctance. It can be expected that they will have some trouble considering a change this big may not be easy for them. Leaving their home and moving to an unfamiliar Assisted Living community where they know no one can take an emotional toll on them. Be patient and understanding, as it will take them some time to transition fully. Be open-minded and listen to their concerns in an effort to see if there is anything you can do to make their space feel more like home.
2. **Help them move to their new home.** It can help to make your loved one's transition easier if you help them throughout the moving process. Being there for your loved one at each step of the moving process will help them to feel as though you want them to be comfortable and that you care about how this change is affecting them. You can offer to help them pack belongings to take with them, as well as discard unwanted items at donation centers. Helping them to downsize can take some of the stress off of them and help them to not feel so overwhelmed. On the day of the move, help them unpack, learn the locations of various rooms in the community and eat with them.
3. **Make sure they have what they love.** If in their house they had a candy basket or often shared coffee with their neighbors or friends, make sure that they always have these items stocked in their new home. It may encourage them to continue the tradition and help them to begin to socialize and make new friends. If your loved one had pictures covering the walls in their old home, make sure they have photographs of the people they miss and those who influenced them hanging around their new home.
4. **Talk to the staff.** Let the staff know about your loved one's likes, dislikes, routines and interests. By talking to the staff about your loved one, you could help them to make a connection that can make them feel more welcome and comfortable in their community. As they get to know your loved one, they are more likely to feel at ease and adjust easier since those caring for them know who they are personally.

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- 5. Get them to socialize and get involved.** Don't force your loved one to socialize right away, but help them to get familiar with the people who live near them and the activities that are offered. By doing this, they are more likely to begin to feel comfortable enough to start doing new things. Talk to the community's lifestyle specialist to learn what kinds of activities and programs are available for the residents. Keep in mind the activities your loved one enjoys. If your loved one enjoyed planting flowers, encourage them to get involved in gardening. If they love to read, purchase a few books for their book club or show them where the library is. If they are not yet comfortable attending activities alone, offer to attend some with them.

By recognizing your loved one's emotions and considering how they feel, you are able to bond with them and make them feel as though they are supported in this change which makes the transition to an Assisted Living community easier – and happier – for everyone involved.

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