**When Is the Right Time for a Move to Assisted Living?**

It can be difficult for adult children to make the decision to transition an elderly parent or loved one into an assisted living community. However, there comes a point when the transition is necessary. This occurs when the elderly individual is unable to perform several or most activities of daily living. Signs it may be time to make the transition are as follows:

* Forgetting to eat or not eating regularly (dehyradation)\*
* Forgetting to check mail or pay bills
* Not taking medication (or taking it incorrectly)\*
* Incontinence
* Decreased mobility (or falls)\*
* Recent accidents
* Chronic health conditions
* Showing signs of memory loss, etc.
* Slow recovery times
* Weight loss
* Decline in personal hygiene
* Loss of active relationships
* Increase in days without leaving the house
* Stale or rotten food
* Decreased in driving ability
* Decreased housekeeping

There are additional signs you can look for that may support your case or convince a hesitant parent or child. If your elderly loved one becomes aggressive towards you or other family members, frequently wanders or exhibits agitated behavior that becomes increasingly worse as the day progresses (a condition known as Sundowning*(vi)*), it may be time to transition from independent living to assisted living. If the older adult’s needs become increasingly complex, or if you incessantly worry about his or her safety when you’re not around, additional help may be necessary. Finally, if you find yourself avoiding your elderly parent, feeling angry toward him or her or experiencing extreme anxiety because of the stress you’re under, it may be time to relinquish control.

**How to Have the Conversation with Your Parents**

Very few families plan for long-term senior care. Those that do find that when it comes time to have the [transition conversation](https://www.aplaceformom.com/planning-and-advice/articles/having-the-conversation), dialogue comes easy and without opposition. Families that don’t plan, however, find that it’s helpful to have an advisor walk them through the process. Advisors talk with families every day and have proven methods for helping the conversation along:

* Get the whole family involved and identify a single point of contact and key decision-maker.
* Do your homework and explore the various types of care available, preferably with your aging loved one.
* Have the discussion in a non-threatening environment.
* Be clear about your concerns so your parent understands you’re acting in his or her best interests.
* End the conversation with a plan in place.

**Moving Past the Guilt**

Whether the decision to move your aging parent into an assisted living community is made slowly and with the help of multiple family members, or if it is the result of unexpected health concerns, it is likely to come with a sense of guilt. Feelings of guilt are common in these situations, and they are unlikely to ebb once the decision is confirmed. In fact, many adult children experience increased remorse and worry as they let go of the small details they’re used to managing. The good news is, you don’t have to live with that guilt forever. Use these tips to move on from your self-reproach and to come to peace with your decision:

* Identify the triggers for your guilt and develop productive strategies to overcome them. (Maybe you feel guilty because Mom didn’t want to move into a senior care facility, or maybe your self-blame stems from the fact that you feel relief now that she’s in someone else’s care.)
* Acknowledge that the transition is a huge life change and, like other changes of its magnitude, requires an adjustment and reflection period.
* Remember why you decided to make the transition in the first place. Whether because you were under a lot of stress or your loved one’s needs were simply too great, you did not come to the decision lightly.

***Sources***

(i)Sauer, A. (2018, July 18). Improved State Guide to Assisted Living Records. Retrieved from <https://www.aplaceformom.com/blog/improved-state-guide-to-assisted-living-records/>

*(ii)*Glossary of Senior Living Terms. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.aplaceformom.com/planning-and-advice/articles/glossary-of-senior-living-terms>

*(iii)*Fowler, K. (2019, June 19). ADLs and IADLs. Retrieved from <https://www.aplaceformom.com/blog/adls-and-iadls/>

*(iv)*Cost of Long Term Care by State: 2018 Cost of Care Report. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.genworth.com/aging-and-you/finances/cost-of-care.html>

*(v)*Eligibility for Veterans Pension (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.va.gov/pension/eligibility/>

*(vi)*Sundown Syndrome: Triggers & Management. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.aplaceformom.com/planning-and-advice/articles/sundowners-syndrome>