



# Senior Housing

## NEXT STEPS

### **When A Loved One Can No Longer Live Independently, There Are New Challenges - And New Opportunities.**

When is it time to face the fact that a parent needs help with day-to-day living? And how to sort through the myriad options—from in-home care to nursing facilities—and make the best choices?

As with most turning points in life, there are ways to ease the transition— and possibly even to turn it into a positive change with a happy ending. Very often, after a transition period of living a certain way for a long time, seniors can discover that being cared for can make them more active and feel more secure in their environment.

But, initially, losing independence is difficult and facing the unknown is rarely pleasant. A bit of homework and research—knowing what to do and expect— can make a transition to senior housing less stressful and more manageable. Moving a parent to senior housing with options like assisted living, or a nursing home is just as hard for the children as it is for the parents. Sometimes, it can be one of the hardest decisions to make in life. Researching a potential new home before a crisis cuts down on the stress.

### **A NEW KIND OF FREEDOM.**

When it becomes apparent that seniors can't perform physical self-care tasks or organize their daily life, it's time to take the first step— a frank discussion to address ways these challenges can best be met. Schedule a time for the discussion, set an agenda and be honest and caring in your speech and manner. Be clear about the goal: to maintain independence, autonomy, personal safety, and

then discuss the choices available. If at all possible, discuss staying at home in familiar surroundings, which almost all seniors want at first.

The next step should be a complete medical and social geriatric assessment, which can be done in specialty clinics. Home care companies often also use geriatric social workers to do home visits to determine if at-home care is possible. Personal preferences are easily accommodated in an in-home setting. But sometimes, staying at home is just not possible with the physical limitations of the senior and overall care of the home. For seniors who can't remain at home, there are options based on the level of care needed. For the senior that can no longer take care of their home, but is still physically active, a senior housing facility that offers several levels of care is an option. The senior can remain independent in an apartment-like setting, with communal meals served three times a day, and activities scheduled from card games to exercise classes, plus daily trips outside the facility as well as group outings to ball games and other activities. But if the need arises, assistance with the activities of daily living can be arranged for an additional fee and residents also have emergency call systems, and staff on duty 24 hours a day. Offering the highest level of care are the skilled nursing facilities (SNF's) with licensed nurses on hand 24/7 plus a staff of certified nursing aides.

## **EVALUATING THE NEW DIGS**

It's essential for a senior's or their family to do as much research as possible. Seek referrals from doctors, healthcare professionals, friends and colleagues. Listen to what others say about senior facilities. Drop by unannounced and ask to read their latest inspection