

NEWS

OF OLDER AMERICANS

Easing the Transition to Assisted Living

by Dr. Judy Kariansky

(NAPSA)—As many parents age, they may no longer be entirely self-sufficient, and need to move to assisted living facilities. Many misperceptions persist about these facilities.



Dr. Judy

But today they are more like resorts than nursing homes. Nursing homes are designed to supervise older adults unable to care for themselves, whereas assisted living facilities offer help

with daily activities, but give residents as much independence as they want.

Preparing To Move In

Despite the comforts afforded by assisted living, varied feelings arise when an older person moves into a facility. By this time in their life, adults usually have set patterns in their daily activities and are accustomed to being self-sufficient. It is natural to feel frustrated, helpless or even angry at having to leave your home.

Loved ones also have stressful reactions to the move, which can strain family relationships at a time when open communication is extremely important. Counteract these negative feelings with positive emotions. Realize that you're

doing the best for the whole family, and the move will likely offer a better situation for all.

I have learned through my work that people are extremely resilient. Once the initial shock of a move is over, adults often come to enjoy their new living arrangement.

Handling Lingering Doubts

If residents still cannot overcome their sadness, or if they experience deeper depression, treatments and services are available that can help. The physical and emotional symptoms of clinical depression range from extreme sadness to fatigue, all of which are treatable by therapy and medication.

The most important way to help ease the transition from independence to assisted living is by open communication, so it's important to discuss any concerns that you may have about your new living situation.

People are social beings who need friends and family to survive. A supportive social network becomes more important as we grow older. Living in an assisted living facility provides a readily available social network with plenty of opportunities for a happy retirement.

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