



STONEBAY
of Orono

SENIOR LIVING

TRANSITION TO ASSISTED LIVING

Convincing elderly parents to move to a more supportive environment and finding an assisted living community they like is only half the challenge when it is time for a senior to make a change. The next step is managing the often-stressful process of downsizing and packing up their home.

To help make moving elderly parents to assisted living a little easier on the entire family, we've pulled together seven tips for adult children to use.

Checklist for Moving an Elderly Parent to Assisted Living

This checklist will help you get organized for a senior loved one's move:

- 1. Set Realistic Expectations:** Our first suggestion is to have realistic expectations about how much you can get done in a day. Unless you are making this move in the midst of a crisis, try to give yourself and your parent permission to work at a more leisurely pace. Don't try to downsize their entire home in a weekend if you can avoid it. Working at a more comfortable pace helps keep anxiety lower, while giving you the chance to reminisce about time spent together in their house.
- 2. Identify the Most Cherished Possessions:** We all have things around our homes that we consider to be our treasures. These are the belongings we aren't willing or want to part with. It can help you make plans for their assisted living apartment if you identify which items your senior loved one cherishes most and won't make a move without. In the case of belongings like family antiques that just won't fit in your loved one's new apartment, ask your parent if there is someone in the family, they would like to pass the piece on to. They may be more agreeable to parting ways with it if they know it will find a new home with a family member or friend who will appreciate it.
- 3. Create a Floor Plan Layout:** After your parent has selected the apartment or suite in the assisted living community that they will be moving in to, ask the staff for a detailed copy of the floor plan. Make sure dimensions for each room are marked. Then measure all of their furniture so you can create a layout of each room.

4. Begin in Rooms Used Least: If your parent has lived in their home for many years, it is probably full of things they won't need after their move. But it can be emotionally challenging to part with so many treasures. One approach that might help ease them in to the process of sorting and downsizing is to begin in the rooms they don't use very often.

5. Sort by Final Destination: As you are working your way through sorting each room, think about items in terms of its final destination. Set up and label boxes by those destinations. A few suggestions for labels include: "Move," "Charity," "Family" and "Trash." As you go through each closet or drawer, separate items in to these boxes accordingly. Try to avoid creating any "Maybe" piles that you will have to go back through a second or third time.

6. Get Involved at the Assisted Living Community: Because the downsizing process sometimes takes longer than you hope, it isn't uncommon for older adults to begin second guessing their decision to move. Make the transition go more smoothly by encouraging your senior loved one to start attending events and participating in activities at their new assisted living community even before they move. The staff can help make these arrangements. This will allow your family member to make new friends and get to know their way around before moving day arrives.

7. Create a Moving Schedule: Once you have an idea of what your loved one's actual moving date will be, create a moving schedule. Keep in mind that some days and weeks of the month are more popular for moving than others. For example, moving companies will tell you that the end of the month and weekends are busy times for them. You may have better luck --- and get a better price --- if you plan to move on a Tuesday or Wednesday in the middle of the month. Use that date to schedule other contractors and to arrange for utilities to be turned off.

8. Assemble a Moving Day Box: Our final suggestion is to put together a box of moving day essentials and valuables you don't want the movers to handle. It should include medications, important papers, snacks, beverages and other necessities. Keep this box with you on moving day.

We hope this checklist for moving an elderly parent to an assisted living community helps make the transition to a new chapter in life a positive one!