

The Moving Transition: Re-homing Frail Older Relatives to Senior Care

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Objectives for this session

Participants will be able to:

- ▶ Articulate the pros and cons of home care versus residential senior care for frail elders.
- ▶ Explain different types of senior housing.
- ▶ Identify ways to assess various housing options.
- ▶ List five ways to make the transition as smooth as possible.

When is it no longer safe?

- ▶ Individual differences in risk tolerance
- ▶ Living alone
- ▶ Family support
- ▶ Ability to afford help at home
- ▶ Ability to tolerate help at home
- ▶ Ability to respond to emergency

When is it no longer safe?

- ▶ Strangers in the house
- ▶ Personal habits: smoking, walking, hoarding, phone calls, gambling
- ▶ Judgment impaired
- ▶ Giving money away
- ▶ Repeated phone calls to family
- ▶ Signs of anxiety or fear

Caregiving at home

PROS

- ▶ Environment
 - ▶ Supportive
 - ▶ Familiar
 - ▶ Home turf
- ▶ Sense of control
- ▶ May save money
- ▶ Most people want to be at home
- ▶ Care is sometimes better

CONS

- ▶ Isolation
 - ▶ Caregiver
 - ▶ Care recipient
- ▶ Care may be too difficult
- ▶ Lack of stimulation
- ▶ Safety
- ▶ Boredom
- ▶ Home turf: bringing a stranger in the house
- ▶ Physical environment

Moving to residential care

PROS

- ▶ 24 hour supervision
- ▶ May be safer than home
- ▶ Family is family, not main caregiver
- ▶ Social & recreational opportunities
- ▶ Trained staff
- ▶ Caregiver can attend to own well-being

CONS

- ▶ Usually more expensive
- ▶ Relative may not want to go or may have trouble adjusting
- ▶ Caregiver may feel like failure
- ▶ These days there may be staffing shortages

Why families make the decision to move a relative

- Exhausted
- More supervision needed
- Living situation
- No longer safe
- Can't do it all
- Emergency situation, illness
- Home care too difficult
- Caregiver becomes ill
- \$\$\$ and many more....

Types of senior housing

- ▶ Independent apartments / condos
- ▶ Assisted living
 - ▶ Within larger community (e.g., Chelsea Retirement Comm., Brecon Village, Balfour, Hillside Terrace, Story Point)
 - ▶ Stand alone residences (e.g., Brookdale, University Living)
 - ▶ Small group homes (adult foster care) (e.g., Barton Manor, Memory Lane)
- ▶ Stand alone Memory care / Alzheimer's care / dementia care (e.g., Vibrant Life, Atria)
- ▶ Nursing home

- ▶ Plan ahead!!! Don't get caught in an emergency with no options.

Considerations in choosing residential care

- ▶ Financial situation
- ▶ Location
- ▶ Functional ability of relative
- ▶ Residential model & requirements

A few questions to ask & things to look for when you visit

- ▶ Staff-resident ratios
- ▶ Interactions between staff & residents
- ▶ Activities & activity schedule
- ▶ Appearance of residents
- ▶ Visiting policies
- ▶ Levels of care /extra fees

- ▶ Your gut feeling - visit several times if you can

Dilemmas for families as they prepare to move a relative

- ▶ What to tell their relative
- ▶ How much to involve him/her in the move
- ▶ What to move, what not to move
- ▶ Dealing with others who don't support the move
- ▶ Dealing with own emotions

Talking about the move

- ▶ When?
 - ▶ Effect on person
 - ▶ Extent of memory loss
 - ▶ Past experiences
 - ▶ Family's ability to cope
- ▶ Who?

Talking about the move

- ▶ What to say?
 - ▶ How to describe it
 - ▶ Small amount of information
 - ▶ Emotional content
 - ▶ Consistency
 - ▶ Useful phrases, “Your doctor has prescribed...” “An apartment” “While I’m away” “For awhile”

Deciding to visit before the move

- ▶ Past experiences
- ▶ Person's abilities
- ▶ Family's emotional state
- ▶ Possible consequences

Making moving an easier process

- ▶ Think of it as a process - break it into smaller steps
- ▶ **Before** the move
- ▶ **During** the move
- ▶ **After** the move

Before the move

- ▶ Complete all paperwork ahead of time
- ▶ Try to schedule the move at your relative's best time of day
- ▶ Arrange for someone to be with you on the day of
- ▶ Prepare notes for staff about your relative's needs
- ▶ If it makes sense for your relative, involve him/her:
 - ▶ Deciding what to take ahead of time
 - ▶ Visiting several times

During the move

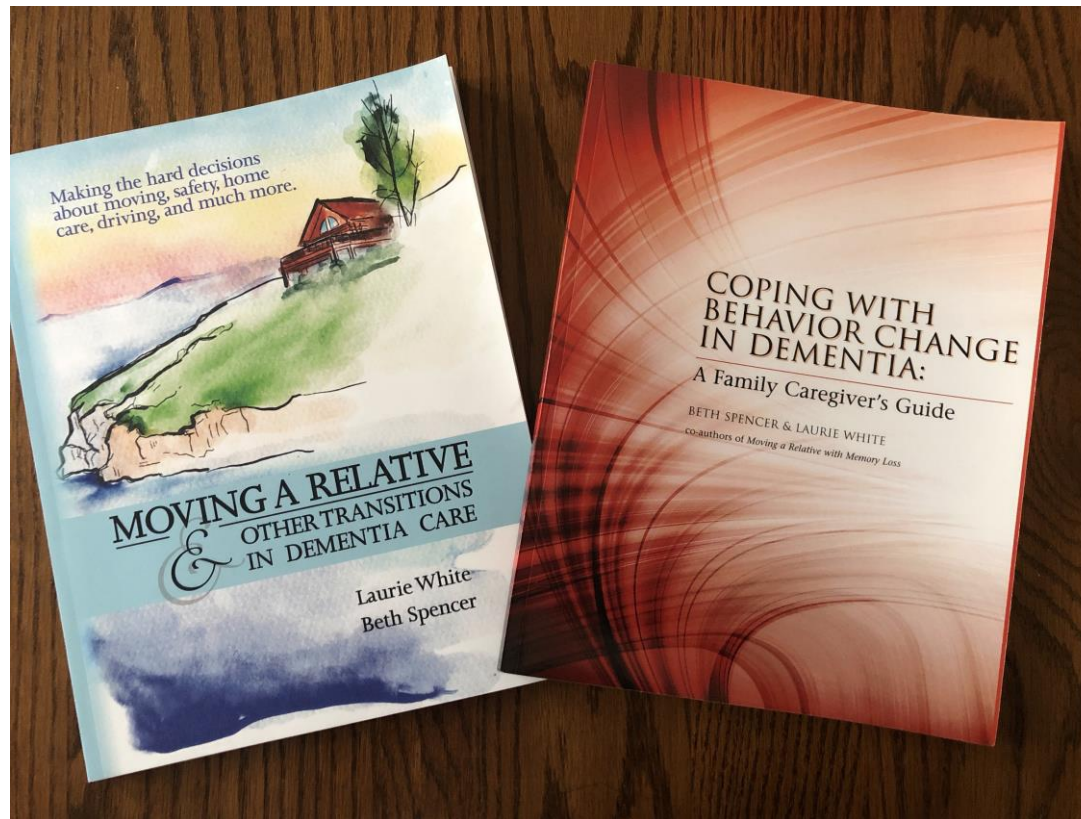
- ▶ Be prepared for this to be emotional
- ▶ Recognize that plans can go astray
- ▶ Dedicate the entire day to moving
- ▶ Plan your departure
- ▶ Find out whom to call to check in

- ▶ Plan something for yourself after you leave

After the move

- ▶ Plan regular visits:
 - ▶ Mealtimes
 - ▶ Joining activities with your relative
 - ▶ Planning a special activity to do together
- ▶ Short visits are often enough
- ▶ Keep numbers of visitors small - don't overwhelm

Dementiacarebooks.com



Resources

- ▶ UM Geriatrics Center Community Resources

<https://medicine.umich.edu/dept/geriatrics-center/community-programs>

- ▶ UM Housing Bureau for Seniors

<https://www.uofmhealth.org/hbs/housing-bureau-seniors-home>

- ▶ Area Agencies on Aging

<https://eldercare.acl.gov/Public/Index.aspx>