

10 Mistakes to Avoid re: Sr. Living Communities

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10) DON'T: Put off the decision until you get "that bad".

DO: Get to know your options before a decision needs to be made. Then decide what your preferences are. Consider setting a specific landmark to initiate the transition. (A date, a change in health, a recommendation from a physician, a financial factor, etc) Be pro-active and make the plan happen.



9) DON'T: Ignore the "signs and wonders".

DO: Take note of changes in your life. When common daily activities start to become more difficult, you may appreciate the advantage of living in a community with readily available support services.

8) DON'T: Be afraid to ask too many questions about the community.

DO: Ask away. Think about what has been important to you in your life. Ask what the community has to offer in connection with your interests.

7) DON'T: Miss the opportunity to get the inside scoop.

DO: Ask about upcoming activities and events where you can meet some current residents and get their perspective on life in the community. Ask about accommodations, services, activities, atmosphere, management and staff, etc. Try to get a general feel of what it is like to live in the community.

6) DON'T: Set unrealistic expectations.

DO: Make the most of this chapter in your life. Identify your needs and preferences, then find a community that will be able to meet them. If you are partial to life on the ranch or farm, a simple community with a rural setting will likely be a good fit. If you want to live every day like you are on a cruise ship, then a high-end community in an urban setting will likely be a better fit.

5) DON'T: Assume you can't afford it.

DO: Do your homework and check your math. You might be surprised how much your current living situation costs! Senior living communities typically include some utilities, emergency call service, basic transportation and housekeeping in the monthly rate. Renters insurance is inexpensive, and appliances and maintenance are generally provided.

4) DON'T: Think you have to make the transition alone.

DO: Ask for support from family and friends who can be an effective sounding board as you consider your options. Ask for input from those closest to you. Discuss your health, finances, social involvement, and preferences for the next chapter in your life. Most retirement communities have senior living advisors on staff to assist with the process.

3) DON'T: Wear out your support system.

DO: Hire professionals to do the tasks you are not comfortable with or can't/don't want to do. Most communities have a network of service providers to help with everything from preparing legal documents, to packing, moving, and cleaning. You may benefit more from allowing friends and family to walk the journey with you rather than do the work.

2) DON'T: Wait for a crisis or catastrophe to mandate a move.

DO: Make the move on your own initiative so you can *enjoy* the benefits of living in a retirement community without really "needing" the services it offers. Get to know some of the residents, how the community works, and what services are available. (for future reference)

1) DON'T: Wait until you are ready to move before "rightsizing".

DO: Determine how much space you really need in order to feel comfortable. Then visualize your personal belongings in that new space and work toward dispersing everything else. (give away to family or friends, charity, yard sales, etc.) Ask for a floor plan with dimensions so you can sketch in major elements like sofas, tables, chairs, bed, etc. Use color coded sticky notes to help sort large items.