



Moving to a Memory Care Community



There comes a time when a person with dementia is no longer safe to live independently. If you have determined that the best decision for your loved one is to move into a memory care community, use these strategies to help moving day go as smoothly as possible.

Address underlying emotions:

Rather than trying to explain the move to your loved one, focus on helping them feel safe and secure.

- Focus on bolstering the person's needs to feel safe, a sense of belonging, and community.
- On moving day, surround them with their favorite music, photos, snacks, and smells.

Keep it simple:

Hold off on discussing the move too far ahead of time. Stay away from statements that expect too much emotional processing.

- Avoid outlining the various reasons why the person has to move, or explaining that this is their new home. This will lead to feelings of insecurity and is more likely to generate resistance.
- Here are some accessible ways to describe what a memory care community is:
 - A nice place; a place with beautiful décor and lighting
 - A place with caring staff to be sure you have everything you need
 - A place that smells good; a place with happy sounds, music, laughter
 - A place within a familiar city/town
 - A place where family and friends will love to spend time

Stay positive:

Upon arrival to the memory care community, use concrete, descriptive statements about what is happening and where they are going.

- Some examples of helpful phrases include:
 - *"We are all going to a beautiful place today."*
 - *"We are sure you'll feel safe and comfortable."*
 - *"This place is full of people who really care. They have delicious meals here!"*
 - *"You have your own place—you belong."* (Avoid saying, *"This is your new home."*)
- Remember that if you aren't feeling confident in the decision, your loved one won't either.

Create a partnership:

Let the person know you are on their side.

- If they complain or say it's awful, agree with them. Then try to distract or engage in an activity. (*"Thank you for telling me. Let's take a walk around and see what we can find out."*)
- It's ok to say that it isn't permanent. In fact, permanence is scary for people with dementia.
- (*"We're just testing things out, we will make a change if it's not working."*)

Seek Advice:

Always remember that you have the Seniors At Home team to support you—just ask!

Contact Seniors At Home's Center for Dementia Care

Call 415-449-3700, email dementiacare@jfcs.org or visit seniorsathome.org