

Making the Move: Tips on Transitioning to a New Community

Moving is never easy. As you or your loved one makes the decision to move into a senior living community, there can be a lot of unknowns. The following tips are designed to make the transition the best experience possible.

The most critical recommendation is to have visited the new apartment several times if possible. Going on different days of the week or at different times of day can help give you a well-rounded view of the facility. Beyond that, you should:

Plan to bring in help

Whether you are a new tenant planning on moving yourself in or the family of a soon-to-be tenant, it's always best to find help. Most of the time, friends and family members are willing to pitch in to help with boxing up possessions, transportation, and other tasks.

Depending on the situation, however, it may be advantageous to consult a Senior Move Manager. This professional will be very familiar with the process of moving from a house to a senior living community, and can offer vital insights into everything from organization to emotion.

Pack in advance

When you are dealing with decades worth of memories and belongings, it can be difficult to decide what to bring and what to leave. Senior living apartments will be smaller than a house in the suburbs, so hard decisions may have to be made. It's beneficial to start this process as soon as the decision to move is official. This will give the tenant and their family plenty of time to find new homes for family keepsakes and do any necessary shopping.

Pin down move-in day details

The day of the move will be hectic. Plan ahead by speaking to the staff at the new community and finding out what move-in day looks like, from paperwork that needs to be completed to special events that may interfere with travel paths. Knowing what to expect can help make the move smooth and keep nerves calm.

Pictures and floorplans can help

It's advantageous to take pictures of the apartment you or your loved one will be moving into, in addition to finding accurate floorplans and measurements. This gives you certain details you need (such as window and outlet placement), and can help you make a move-in plan. This plan will help keep everyone organized and make the move more efficient. For example, "The couch will be easy to carry around that corner, but not if we've already placed the coffee table there – the couch needs to come in first."

Participate early on

While unpacking, it can be tempting for the tenant to stay in the new apartment and try to settle in. We encourage families and seniors to get involved as early as possible, however. Meeting staff members and other tenants can help you or your loved one feel at home. Additionally, when the friends and family who helped with move have to leave, there will still be support on site to make the transition more comfortable.

Patience is key

Even if you are extremely prepared and organized, there will be move-in day emotions to deal with. Any move is difficult, and senior living communities are often different than what you may have experienced to that point. Grieving, confusion, nervousness, and frustration are common when such major changes are being made. Be patient with your family, those around you, the staff, and especially yourself. It's natural to have these feelings – another reason to keep loved ones close by for the process.

Following these tips is a good start to making the move into a senior living apartment a great experience. Moving may not be easy, but it doesn't have to be a wearisome or intimidating processes. Take a deep breath, and enjoy living in your new community!