

SHOULD THEY STAY OR SHOULD THEY GO!

As the child of an aging parent, safety should always be your number one priority when contemplating your parents' care. Many older adults become victims of accidents that occur right in their own homes. As we age, it can become increasingly difficult to walk up and down stairs.

Lugging heavy grocery bags can be exhausting. Cooking nutritious and balanced meals may prove challenging. Moreover, the long, cold winters and hot, humid summers can make getting out of the house quite problematic. Your parent may be left feeling isolated and alone.

WHEN SHOULD MY PARENT MOVE TO AN ASSISTED LIVING FACILITY?

Assisted living facilities can be the perfect solution for people who have difficulty performing daily tasks such as bathing, dressing, and grooming, but who do not need around the clock care. Such residences can also prove to be the best alternative for people who live alone and whose quality of life is hampered because they are isolated and they have limited social interaction.

Although services do vary from one facility to the next, most offer health and exercise programs, housekeeping and laundry service, transportation, dining options, and social activities. Such residences have a great number of physical, social and emotional benefits.

Many people thrive in such an environment, even if they did not fare well living on their own. The knowledge that medical attention is available on site 24 hours a day, seven days a week, affords both parent and child peace of mind.

Assisted Living also it enables seniors to regain their self-confidence and reclaim their lives. In fact, many older adults lead a much higher quality of life and are

happier once they move to an assisted living residence. They start eating better, exercising more and enjoying the company of new friends. The added bonus of having staff around greatly improves their overall wellbeing as they ensure that residents take their medication and eat well. Moreover, they are in an environment that increases their opportunities for social interaction.

Participating in group activities can give your parents an important boost and keep them from sinking into a sedentary and lonely lifestyle.

FRIENDS BECOME INVALUABLE AS WE AGE

Developing strong, intimate social networks is one of the cornerstones of successful aging. Not only do close ties provide our lives with meaning and purpose, but they are also essential to our social, emotional and physical wellbeing, especially as we age.

Findings from a recent study conducted by Simon Fraser's gerontology research centre revealed that the happiest seniors are those that feel a sense of belonging to community. According to Dr. Veronica Doyle, director of the study, "it isn't how often you see your kids –it's how many places in the world you are a somebody". Assisted living facilities provide an arena for socialization and an opportunity to develop intimate bonds.

TANGO YOUR WAY TO IMPROVED BRAIN POWER AND BETTER BALANCE!

Another advantage of such facilities is their varied exercise programs. You have to inquire as to what each facility offers, but most have extensive programs ranging from strength training to tango lessons!

We have often been told that exercise is essential to an active and healthy old age. Patricia Mckinley, researcher, at McGill University, knew that motivating older adults to exercise was going to require much more than describing the benefits of working out. So she set out to find a physical activity that seniors would find FUN. She settled on the Tango.

Mckinley's findings indicate that tango dancing improves brainpower and balance amongst older adults. Those assigned to take tango lessons not only learned the art of Argentine Tango dancing, but improved their balance, posture and coordination in comparison to a control group of walkers.

After only 10 weeks all participants in the study had improved their scores on memory tests, but only the tango dancers had better scores on a multitasking test.

This is fantastic news for older adults as they can tango their way to good health.

FIND A RESIDENCE THAT COMPLEMENTS YOUR LIFE STYLE.

Today, there are many residential options to choose from. Your job is to find an assisted living facility that best suits your parents' life style and needs. Your choice will depend on many factors such as location, level of care and services, reputation of the facility, decor and cost. Your parents' may desire a relaxed and cozy atmosphere, or they may prefer to live in the lap of luxury, or anything in between! Many senior residences provide a host of living options depending upon the level of care that is needed. Some homes offer independent living, assisted living and even programs designed for patients with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. And still others offer a "continuum of care" which caters to all of the housing needs of retirees from independent living to full service long term and hospice care.

Seniors can ease their move into a senior residence by choosing a facility that caters to the various stages of aging. They can transition from an independent living facility to assisted living and then to a nursing home, if needed, all within the same organization.

As we age our sense of belonging and connection becomes vital to our overall

wellbeing. So when looking for that perfect community for mom or dad, make sure that it provides a blend of social, physical and intellectual pursuits that nurture both body and soul.

As always if you have any comments, suggestions or questions please contact me at gill@directionsrc.com

I look forward to speaking to you real soon.

Until then,

Happy planning

Gillian

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