



**The Family's Guide to Assisting  
a Loved One in Overcoming  
Resistance to Senior Living**

# Introduction

Most people do not make plans for moving to a senior living community such as Parkwood Heights. Eighty-five percent of seniors prefer to age in their own home, and it's difficult to accept when that's no longer a safe option. Starting a conversation about senior living is a daunting challenge for family caregivers to face.

There's no way to predict how your loved one will react to initial conversations about long-term care needs. Shock, anger, sorrow, and denial are common responses that seniors have to difficult news. A muted response is also possible; your loved one might change the subject or make a joke. Or, perhaps your loved one has already considered transitioning to a senior community and didn't know how to initiate the conversation with you. This unpredictability is one of the biggest challenges in starting the conversation.

## Starting the Conversation

### **Prepare For The Conversation:**

Before you start the conversation with a loved one, speak with other family members. Focus on your loved one's current and future care needs. Reconcile differing opinions so your family can move forward with a unified strategy to get your loved one the care they need.

One or two family members should be the lead to start the conversation with your loved one so they do not feel overwhelmed. A large group setting may make them feel overwhelmed.

### **Approaching The Subject:**

Approach the idea of a senior living community with your loved one as early as possible. Start the conversation with a simple question like asking them where they see themselves growing older. This is a non-confrontational way to gauge how they feel about their long term care needs.

### **Continuing The Conversation:**

Don't expect your loved one to make a decision right away. The transition to a senior living community is a major life decision. The topic may need to be approached

several times. If your loved one expresses anger, denial or opposition, don't argue. Keeping the lines of communication open is more productive.

Bring the family support team into the conversation if needed. Discuss the family's concerns and wishes in a non-confrontational way. Focus these conversations on your loved one's needs and best interests. Avoid using terms such as "You need to". Empathizing with your senior's concerns is also important. Empower your loved one with options that reflect their objections. They need to be active participants in the process.

## Common Objections

Predicting how your loved one feels about the transition to a senior living community is impossible. Everyone has unique feelings and concerns about their long-term care needs. However, understanding a number of common objections to senior living communities can be the first step toward overcoming them.

### **Denial:**

As seniors grow older, maintaining independence and autonomy are among their top priorities. Perhaps you've heard your loved one say "I'm fine on my own". Feelings of denial are often tied to the natural desire to maintain independence.

### **Social Concerns:**

Seniors are a source of wisdom and inspiration. Your loved one may fear that transitioning to a senior living community will diminish or change that role. In fact, role changes are one of the biggest challenges of aging. Adult children becoming caregivers and long-held community roles being relinquished are hard to accept for seniors.

Your loved one may fear that transitioning to a senior living community will sever social ties and change their social roles.

### **Financial Concerns:**

Just 1 in 5 people under 70 have made plans to retire to a community like Parkwood Heights. Financial uncertainty hardens opposition to the transition, even if your loved one may not admit it.

### **Generational Biases:**

When you talk about senior living communities with your loved one, they may hear "nursing home." Seniors often recall the clinical and institutional "nursing home" settings of decades past. This is even true for some baby boomers who want to age in their own homes because of negative perceptions of senior living communities.

Senior living communities have changed dramatically over the decades. They provide the care your loved one needs—and the social engagement and homelike atmosphere that we all desire. Senior communities, such as Parkwood Heights, have proven to dramatically improve the quality of life for older individuals. Still, your loved one may not understand how senior communities have evolved.

# Overcoming Your Loved One's Objections

Empathizing with your loved one's objections to a senior community is important. Taking proactive steps to address objections is equally important. Removing uncertainty, addressing concerns, and providing options can pave the way to acceptance.

## **Research, Visit, and Talk About Senior Living Communities:**

Find a nearby senior living community that meets your loved one's current and future care needs, and plan a visit for yourself. Walk the grounds, talk to the staff and residents, and get a feel for what it has to offer your loved one. Then, talk to your loved one about visiting the community with you—if only to "humor you." Plan a lunch visit so he or she can meet the staff and residents in a social setting.

As you research various types of senior living communities, emphasize how each can help your loved one maintain independence, engage socially, and live a higher quality of life.

## **Independent Senior Living:**

If your loved one performs basic activities of daily living (ADLs) but needs a home that's easier to maintain or is safer, an independent senior living community, such as Parkwood Heights, may be the answer. Organized in villas, apartment communities, and continuing care communities, independent living facilities strive to help seniors maintain independence as they age:

- Prolonged independence: Easy-to-maintain homes mean more independence and time for hobbies, travel, and social activities.
- Social engagement: Planned social activities offer opportunities for engagement and companionship. Parkwood Heights offers over 100 activities monthly.
- Privacy: 24-hour emergency response provides and maintains security.
- Meals: Meal plans are available or are included

- Transportation: Transportation services to run errands, meet friends, and keep appointments.
- Housekeeping
- And much more! See the sample listing of what Parkwood Heights has to offer at the conclusion of this document

### **Enriched Living/Assisted living:**

An Assisted or Enriched living community is a flexible option. Seniors maintain independence while receiving personal care and assistance with basic ADLs in an apartment-like setting. Amenities such as health spas, swimming pools, gardens, and beauty salons may be available. Also, continuing care retirement communities (CCRCs) are able to meet your loved one's needs as they change over time. Benefits to discuss with your loved one include:

- All the benefits of Independent Living plus:
  - Case Management
  - Medication Management
  - Assistance with basic ADLs which helps maintain health and independence.
  - Assistance with laundry and personal care needs

### **Memory Care:**

There comes a point when in-home care is no longer safe or feasible for seniors with dementia. Perhaps they experience sundowning or wander from home. Other signs that it may be time for memory care are struggles with personal hygiene or basic ADLs. The benefits of memory care include:

- Care: Staff has specialized training in dementia care and 24-hour supervision.
- Engagement: Sensory-based programming slows the progression of dementia and leads to social engagement.
- Versatility: Care offered for early, middle, and late stages of dementia

### **Financial Planning:**

Removing financial barriers and understanding resources available will make your loved one more open to a senior living community. Helping a loved one make financial plans for a senior living community may soften objections. Parkwood Heights offers various seminars on financial planning throughout the year. Check our website for a list of upcoming events or feel free to contact us for a personal meeting.

### **Here are a few financing options to research and discuss with your loved one:**

- Long-term care insurance: People who purchase long-term care insurance when they're in their 60s, and are in good health, qualify for discounts that people Parkwood Heights Senior Living Campus 1340 Parkwood Drive Macedon New York 14502 [www.parkwoodheights.com](http://www.parkwoodheights.com) 585.223.7595 or 315.986.9100 pwh@parkwoodheights.com

older than 70 do not. Talk to your loved one early about long-term care insurance.

- **Veterans Assistance:** Qualifying Veterans or the spouse of a veteran can receive monthly payments from the Veterans Affairs to assist with the cost of Enhanced Living or Assisted Living.
- **Accelerated death benefit:** A tax-free advance on a life insurance benefit can be used to cover senior living or memory care costs.
- **Life insurance settlements:** Selling a life insurance policy at current market value can help seniors cover assisted living costs.
- **Combination Products:** Plans that combine life insurance and long-term care insurance that a benefit will be paid, either in the form of a life insurance benefit or in the form of a long-term care benefit.
- **Reverse Mortgage:** Seniors can retain ownership of a home and receive monthly reverse mortgage payments to cover senior living costs.
- **Home equity:** Selling a home or taking out a bridge loan can help cover immediate senior living costs.

### **Power of Attorney/Legal Matters:**

As you help your loved one make a financial plan for a senior living community, ensure that their standard and living wills are up to date. Standard wills address matters with your loved one's estate. Living wills address your loved one's wishes for end-of-life care. Also, decide which member of the family will be appointed power of attorney. These steps will help the family respect your loved one's wishes if sudden and difficult decisions must be made.

### **Overcoming Objections While Moving:**

When your loved one agrees to move into a senior living community, they'll still have concerns and objections. As the reality of the transition sets in, new objections and stressors often crop up. Helping your loved one with the logistical details, consolidating possessions, and tying up loose ends with their home will make for a smoother transition. Advanced planning and preparation plays a key role in a senior's transition into a new home, and it reduces anxiety and the risk of associated medical complications.

### **Rightsizing:**

Rightsizing can be a challenge for seniors, enlist the family support team to go through your loved one's house item by item. Participation from your loved one will empower them to make the decisions as to what items will be sold, donated or thrown out. Respect the emotional attachments your loved ones feel toward their possessions. Finding a home for family keepsakes will ease the transition. There are many outside services that could be utilized to aide in this piece of the process.

**Packing:**

Seniors are often encouraged to bring personal possessions to senior living communities. Ask if their community has a recommended packing list and a floor plan. Knowing what to pack and what furniture, decorations and personal effects your loved one will bring will help them adjust to a new home.

**Moving Day:**

Emotions will run high on moving day. Adult children may feel a sense of guilt, and seniors face the prospect of moving into a new, unfamiliar environment. Focus on the benefits of the transition on moving day and emphasize that it's what's best for them. Also, mobilizing your family caregiving team to assist with the move will help logistically—it signals that every family member supports the transition

**After the Move, Getting Settled:**

Once your loved one is settled into their new home they still may have some anxiety and concerns. Remember there is always a period of adjustment. Here are some ways to help your loved one adjust

- Schedule visits: Establish a visitation schedule so your loved one sees friends and family on a regular basis—but don't overbook visits so that he or she doesn't have time to explore new freedoms and social outlets.
- Host a house warming party for your loved one. Invite family and friends to come and see your loved ones new home.
- Communicate with staff: Stay in touch with your loved one's senior living community staffers to understand how he or she is adjusting and how needs are being met.
- Ask if the facility has an ambassador program which will pair your loved one with a current resident to help make the transition easier. At Parkwood Heights, this is one of many amenities we offer during move in.

**Encouragement:**

Help your loved one explore their new freedoms, and encourage them to socialize and participate in planned activities.

We hope this guide has helped you prepare for your loved one's successful transition into a senior living community. Change is difficult for seniors, but a senior living community will give your loved one a higher quality of life, and it will give you peace of mind.

If you would like additional help and/or information about Parkwood Heights or would like to schedule a tour please let us know.

### Parkwood Heights Campus Features

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scenic Setting</li> <li>• Fishing Pond</li> <li>• Hiking Trails &amp; Walking Paths</li> <li>• Activities, outings &amp; entertainment daily</li> <li>• Arts &amp; Crafts Studio</li> <li>• Educational Classes</li> <li>• Dancing &amp; Theme Parties</li> <li>• Trips &amp; Outings</li> <li>• Bingo</li> <li>• Movies</li> <li>• Billiards</li> <li>• Horseshoes</li> <li>• Transportation</li> <li>• Parkwood Park</li> <li>• Garages</li> <li>• Cable/Satellite TV Hookups</li> <li>• Wheelchair Accessibility</li> <li>• Guest Suite</li> <li>• I'm OK Program</li> <li>• Trash removal</li> <li>• Free prescription and grocery delivery</li> <li>• In house banking</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 24-Hour Staffing at Community Center</li> <li>• Full Back Up Generator Power</li> <li>• Fireside Dining Room</li> <li>• Conference Room</li> <li>• Library</li> <li>• Community Center</li> <li>• Game Room</li> <li>• Fitness Center</li> <li>• Wellness Center</li> <li>• Health &amp; wellness programs</li> <li>• On-site lab &amp; physician</li> <li>• Hair Salon &amp; Barber Shop</li> <li>• Therapeutic Spa</li> <li>• Gardens</li> <li>• Private Dining Room</li> <li>• Lawn Maintenance &amp; Snow Removal</li> <li>• Individual Climate Control</li> <li>• Washer/Dryer Hookups</li> <li>• Pets Welcome</li> <li>• Internet Access</li> <li>• Front Porch</li> <li>• Storage</li> </ul> |
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