

Relocating with an Elderly Parent who Needs Extra Support

Whether you and your elder parent work together and decide to relocate together or you both decide it is better for them to stay in their current community, this can be a tough process.

Relocation can either be a positive experience or it can cause challenges. It really depends how you look at it.

Do the pros outweigh the cons?

What are the benefits of your parent relocating with you?

What stresses can appear?

How long is your posting? Ie: two years

What can help to make your decision is putting your heads together with your family and discussing the relocation. When working together with your parent to come to the decision of relocation, here are some things to consider:

[Click here for a list of housing definitions for seniors](#)

- What area are you relocating them to?
- What levels of supports are required for their needs and capabilities? Are they independent?
- Are you and your family willing to care for the elder, or is a care home a better option?
- Include all family members in decision, such as your siblings, partner, and children.
- What is in place now? What is their living and care situation now?
- Will this new community have the proper resources you and your parent need, or does the one you're in now have more to offer?
- What would be easier? Finding supports in your new community or sticking to the supports you already have.
- What would cost less financially? Relocating your parent, and trying to start fresh, or staying in their community in a care facility.
- Is your parent still able to live independently in their current community, or do they require support of a care facility?
- What will be less stressful on your family and consider your partners opinion.
- Work demands (deployment, schedule, season)
- Most importantly, what is it they want? What choices can we make together? Working together still allows them their dignity.
- Consider you parents' relationship with friends, family, groups, church in current community.
- Enlisting the support of health professional with your parents consent.

Click [here](#) if you have decided to relocate with an elder

Click [here](#) if the elder has decided to stay in their current community.

Transition

Transition involves letting go, before someone can settle in and move ahead, not just for a senior, but for anyone relocating can be a hard transition to go through.

It may be harder for someone who needs that extra support, or if they are used to a certain routine, and don't deal with change well. Depending on their disability they will have different ways of reacting to relocation.

Here are some ways to help make that transition smoother:

1. Make sure they know ahead of time about the relocation, and constantly remind them so it does not come as a shock.
2. Be considerate of their needs at this time and try and provide them with choices. For example, when packing include your parent in packing up their most prized possessions to take with them.
3. Make sure the home is adapted to their needs. For example, if there needs to be a lift for wheelchair, or lifts for baths etc. Also ask yourself what are they used to? Ie: if they love being in the living room, maybe set up your new homes living room in a way that they feel comfortable.
4. Consider future planning for their needs in a couple of years, so make sure to adapt home according to future needs.
5. Make sure you know the needs of their disability very well and what kind of support they will need in your new community.
6. Most importantly be there for them emotionally, because it can be an emotional and stressful time.

Here is a Moving Checklist that may be useful to you:

<http://resource.mediabrain.com/infusionnewssiteimages/agingcare/printables/MovingChecklist.pdf>

Tips for the relocation

1. Find out if there is funding for persons with disabilities in your new community for essential items like wheel chairs, lifts, walkers etc. If there is find out how to go about getting that funding. For example the paperwork that needs to be done, and who needs to be contacted.
2. Keep all their medical records to continue medical history in new location
3. Bring a file folder for all paperwork such as medical records in case they get lost on the move, and make extra copies of all files. Find out if your family doctor can give you referrals to other doctors in new location.
4. Find out what financial supports there are in your new community
5. Find health care services according to elder's individual needs. Make sure you know a lot about the support they need, so it will be easier (nursing supports, companion services, transportation, and medical).

6. Find out if there are the necessary professionals in your community who understand the disability your elder has, or the extra support they need. (Psychologist, doctors, nurses)
7. Find out how long the wait is to be able to use resources in community, because every province has their own rules. For example, it is necessary to wait for permanent residency in some provinces before even being able to get on a waitlist for a service.

Choosing the area of living

If you and your parent decided to relocate, make sure you look into the different areas of the city you are relocating to. Do your research on what each area has to offer to help you make your decision.

Some things to keep in mind:

Is the area a walking community?

Is there various ways of transportation? How far of a walk is the bus stop?

Is there a seniors centre close by? How will they get to seniors centre?

Are there medical services near by like a walk-in clinic, hospital?

Are there grocery stores, near by and how will they get there, or do they deliver groceries.

If the elder has decided to stay in their current community

You and your parent have come to the decision that it is better for them to stay in their current community, maybe in a care facility, or with a family member. If the decision is to set up care in a care facility make sure you look into more than one to see what they have to offer.

Things to consider or do when choosing a care facility:

1. **Costs** such as rent, meals, and care services.
2. **Safety** – lifts, wheelchair access, walkers, bars for stability in shower, security, fenced in)
3. **Medical care** – what types of medical care are provided? (Emergency response, 24 nurse, medication distribution)
4. **Personal care** – Do they provided the appropriate personal care for their needs? (Bathing, dressing, feeding, mobility)
5. Go to many different facilities, ask lots of questions and maybe get tours of different care homes to help with you decision.

Choosing a care home checklist.

<http://www.ageuk.org.uk/home-and-care/care-homes/care-home-checklist/>

Housing definitions for seniors

The following definitions are BC definitions. If you go to the family navigator website <http://www.familynavigator.ca/bases> and go to your local base you will find housing definitions for your area.

Assisted living – Housing and hospitality services to seniors who can live independently, but need help with their daily activities.

Independent/Supportive Living – Apartment style housing with usually one or two services that could include grooming, bathing, transportation, or help with meals. You can hire nursing supports to go into this kind of housing.

Complex Care Residences – Care residence for people who have a disability and require daily nurse care and other supports.

Campuses of care residences – All three levels of care: Assisted living, independent/supportive living, and complex care residences. This allows for the senior to change from each type of living, according to the way their needs change.

Moving to a care facility

Moving can be emotional and a time consuming task. No matter the time you have, it is good to start planning how the move is going to happen. This will minimize stress and make the move easier for both you and your parent. Work together with your parent to start disposing of belonging they do not want anymore, or keeping anything they may have a special connection to.

Prepare everything that is necessary for admission to care facility

Pack everything up in advance

You can go set up their new room in the care facility in a way that would make them feel at home.

Making a to do list for everything that has to be done will be very helpful.

Make sure that on moving day the facility is notified in order to provide the right welcoming to your parent.

Family Caregiver

If you both decide it is best for your elder parent to be in the care of a family member, or a family friend over a care facility make sure they know well about the types of support the elder needs. Also make sure they are completely trustworthy and reliable to you. Leave all the proper contact numbers with them, like family doctor, your new numbers, and other friends as well as:

- Names of medical prescriptions
- Important items to elder
- Supports for family caregivers

- There is also respite care for seniors, to give the caregiver a break.
- Make sure they know to check for the national family caregiver network because it is a great resource for family caregivers.

<http://www.familycaregivernetwork.com>

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca> – Seniors Health Canada is also another great resource.