

I'm not ready

If you ask anyone in the retirement industry the statement they hear most often is “I’m not ready!”

My answer to that statement is “Great! Can I help you make a plan? So that when you are ready you know the options available to you! And your family knows what to do in case of a crisis.”

Making these decisions in the middle of a crisis is not the right time or frame of mind to find a new home

- Emotional not thinking logically
- Not sure of the level of care required going forward
- What is the new normal?
- Pressure from the hospital

If you ask Most seniors 1 month after they move, they will say “I wish I had of done this earlier”. I have one resident that tells all those that come for a visit, “Move in when you can take advantage of all the fun things we do. It keeps you younger longer!” She is a vibrant 94-year-old that wouldn’t live anywhere else.

Here are some of the reasons she enjoys life:

- More routine with still lots of flexibility
- Typically, more walking and physical activity
- Better balanced food, helping with medication absorption
- More social opportunities, passive and active
- Less anxiety of being along,
- Feeling safe as there is always someone there if anything goes wrong or you are just unsure.

Respite is a wonderful opportunity for seniors to come to a home, know that it is for a short term, but gets to feel what it’s like to live in that home. We all need help at some points on our lives. Some later than others, some less than others, but the majority of us will need care of some sort. It’s ok to ask for assistance, it allows us to heal faster and more complete. Therefore, most often people recover more thoroughly when they have a bit of support to get through the tough times. They also have that opportunity to recover fully to be able to return to normal activity sooner and build confidence to do so.

There will rarely be the day that the lightbulb goes off and says today is the day I move. Although there is research and planning that needs to take place, don’t get overwhelmed or over analyzing the pros and cons. Most homes will have same amenities, so pass on those details. Go with your gut feeling, what others residents say about living there, your

observations of how staff interact with each other and residents, the look on residents faces, how the meal tasted, the options for care and your impression of the home when you walk in. This is your best guide vs your spreadsheet. If you feel that it's a home that you could be happy and well taken care of, then put your name on the waiting list. Many homes have waiting lists which makes it difficult to get in. Being on a list will prioritize you when emergencies take place. It's like having an insurance policy for a new life.

One way to help you stay true to yourself is write down criteria that you feel is no longer safe to stay at home. For example, I will move when;

- I Struggle to complete any of my daily living tasks, such as dressing, showering, etc
- I Am asking my friends and family to get groceries, take me to Doctor appointments, etc.
- Meal prep is too much trouble and I am losing weight that is not healthy.
- I fall more than 3 times within a year. Or end up in the hospital for a longer than 5 days. Or on multiple occasions.
- I am not getting out to see my friends and doing the things I love to do.
- My medical health begins to decrease or complicated
- I can't drive anymore.

Share this with your family so that they can help you re-evaluate each year. That ensures that everyone is on the same page and your can control your destiny.

I often ask seniors when was the last time you allowed your kids or family members to make a decision about what you wear, let alone where you live. Take control of your life and lifestyle and make the choice yourself. Get them involved and ensure they know your wishes so that if a crisis situation arises that they are just carrying out your preferences and choices, vs making the decisions for you.

Please do this for the health of your relationships with your families and yourself.

See you when you are ready!

Julie Munro