

Guide for Older Adults: How to Include Adult Children in the Senior Living Decision



*Tips for Involving Family Members
in Your Move to a Senior Living Community*



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Introduction

Making the decision to sell your house and move to a senior living community is usually a process. You've likely given it careful consideration before sharing the idea with adult children and other family members. While loved ones are often happy for you and willing to pitch in and help with whatever is needed, it can be an adjustment for them.

Adult children may be nostalgic about your decision to sell the family home, especially if it's a house they grew up in. Some worry that you will feel isolated and lonely. Others might be fearful that the costs are too high and you will run out of money.

Inside this Guide

What can you do to prepare your family for this transition and help them feel included in your decision? In this guide, we have some suggestions for helping those closest to you appreciate the benefits of a senior living community and understand why you've made this decision. We hope these tips will help you feel more confident about sitting down to have this conversation with loved ones.

We've also included a few pointers to help you address potential objections from well-intentioned members of your family. With any luck, you won't encounter these. But just in case you do, you'll have some ideas for what to do and say to keep the process moving forward in a positive way.



Begin the Conversation

As is true of many topics that has the potential to cause disagreement among loved ones, getting started is sometimes the most difficult step. In all likelihood, adult children and other family members will support your decision when they have a better understanding of why you've made this choice and what the benefits are. Here are some suggestions for talking about your plan for the future.

- **Share your reasons for moving:** Adult children sometimes think a parent has decided to move to a senior living community because they aren't doing enough for their senior loved one. This is especially true if you are an active, independent older adult who is making this move to gain more freedom and flexibility. Your loved ones might believe they missed signs that you are having some struggles. By explaining that you are planning for current needs and future wishes, you may help alleviate any guilt they may be feeling.
- **Be honest but kind:** Depending on why you're opting to move, you might need to be tactful as you explain your reasoning. For example, are you struggling with lawn care, snow removal, and other household chores, but can't hire anyone reliable to help complete these tasks? Family members may jump in and offer solutions. You may need to tell them firmly, but kindly, that you are ready for a new chapter in life with greater flexibility and no home-maintenance worries.
- **Prepare for pushback:** Along those same lines, anticipate that some members of your family may try to change your mind. As we grow older, it's not uncommon for loved ones to believe they are responsible for your well-being. That may include trying to influence the choices you make. While adult children may think they have your best interests in mind, if you've carefully thought through your decision to move, it will be important to convey that.

- **Invite family to help with the search:** If you haven't decided on which senior living community is the best fit for you, involving family members in the search might be a great way to help them feel included. This can be an ideal time to ask for their help. It's almost always good to have an extra person attend visits to communities with you. They may spot things you miss or ask questions you don't think of when you tour. Don't forget to find ways for faraway loved ones to support your search, too. For example, you could ask them to read community reviews and ratings online or research local realtors, moving companies, and estate sale companies.





Be Ready to Talk About the Benefits

While many people think the health benefits of a life plan community are strictly medical in nature, the reality is, they are much more comprehensive than that. Being part of a community is good for the body, mind, and spirit. Where you live as you grow older really does play a role in your overall health and well-being.

Take some time to explain all the reasons why this is a decision you'll benefit from now and in the future.

Remember, people often don't have a very detailed understanding of senior living communities unless someone close to them has been a prior resident.

- **Explain how communities support good health:** PSL life plan communities are designed to [promote a culture of wellness](#) that extends far beyond physical fitness. It's an important benefit of moving to a community. But that doesn't mean you shouldn't share what you've learned about how communities support medical needs, too. If you are hospitalized for an illness, for example, a community that offers short-term rehabilitation or home health services will make it easier to continue your recovery after you are discharged from the hospital. Knowing you'll have the on-site assistance you need to safely transition back to the community will give your family peace of mind.



• **Discuss activities and social opportunities:** Of the many myths about senior living communities, one of the most common is that residents spend most of their time watching television and playing bingo. Sharing a copy of the resident calendar of events can help give family members an idea of how vibrant life is at a life plan community. Explain that residents can participate in as many—or as few—events and activities as they choose to each day. From art workshops and gardening to planned travel clubs, activities are available to meet every interest.

• **Address safety measures:** This benefit of senior living often holds great appeal for family members. When they understand the safety measures that are in place, adult children frequently gain peace of mind. Sometimes family members aren't even aware of how much they've been worrying about a senior parent who lives alone until you discuss it out loud. From emergency call systems and accessible bathrooms to team members on hand if needed, communities are designed with both independence and safety in mind.

• **Focus on current and future benefits:**

Finally, be sure to share how life plan communities offer a continuum of care. For people unfamiliar with these communities, this very important benefit might be overlooked. While you may move in as an active, independent adult looking for a maintenance-free lifestyle, you'll do so with the knowledge that other levels and types of care are available if they become necessary. By making this move, you've created a solid plan for today and the future.





Prepare for Potential Objections

Change can be difficult at every age, especially if you don't see it coming. If this move comes as a surprise to your family members, they might not react as positively at first as you'd like them to. That doesn't mean they won't come around once they have all the facts.

Here are a few of the most common concerns your family members might express:

- **Objection: *But you aren't sick***



There is a misconception that senior living communities are for older adults who are in poor health and need assistance. Once your family members understand that older adults often choose to make this move to free themselves from the burdens of home ownership and enjoy all the social aspects of a community, this objection will probably be easy to overcome.

- **Objection: *You'll be lonely and bored***

This is another common objection that stems from not understanding how much there is to do in a life plan community. With a variety of activities to choose from, ranging from volunteer opportunities to fitness classes, book clubs, art classes, movie nights, and outings to popular regional destinations, residents are anything but lonely and bored.

- **Objection: *Don't sell the family home***

For many families, this is one of the most difficult hurdles to get over. There's no denying how tough it can be to downsize your belongings and sell a place you've called home for many years. But there are steps you can take to preserve those memories for generations to come. You can dig up and share your favorite perennials from the garden. Or make a video of the home and incorporate photos from past celebrations there. Or take lots of photos and create albums for family members.

- **Objection: *It's too expensive***

An initial reaction that family members often have is that a life plan community isn't affordable. Once they have a better understanding of what is included and compare it to the true cost of aging in place at home, the easier it is to see the value community living offers. As you prepare to talk with your family about your decision and how to include them in the process, it might be a good idea to create a list of the expenses you incur at home. Don't forget to include yearly expenses, such as property taxes, as well as maintenance and repair costs.





Conclusion

We hope you find this guide useful as you look toward the future and create a plan for moving. One more resource you might find helpful is this [Senior Community Evaluation Checklist](#). We encourage you to download it, with our compliments, and share it with family members who might be aiding you in the search for a life plan community that best fits your needs and goals.

[View Our Community List](#)



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