

7 Biggest Fears of Senior Living

1. I Will Lose My Independence

Some seniors fear that assisted living is equal to a loss of independence, the truth is in fact much the opposite. Yes, you'll have help with cleaning, cooking, and other chores that only become more onerous over time. Senior living offers greater freedom with your precious time To make that time happy and rewarding, communities provide opportunities for social activities on-site as well as transportation around the area when you need it.

2. People Will Forget About Me

It's natural to worry about being alone, especially if you define yourself by those relationships you value. However, moving into senior living doesn't mean you'll lose those relationships. You just might value them even more! At the same time, a senior community provides new social contacts, not to mention on-site help.

3. I Will Get Old and Sick Faster

Whether you're old or young, it's being alone or isolated that leads to anxiety and depression. The social contact a senior community provides is key to better health and quality of life. If a senior loved one is already ill—with Alzheimer's disease, for example—memory care offers daily stimulation, planned activities, and customized care, all of which can actually slow down the progress of an illness or even improve health and behavior.

4. I'll Be Bored

With the amenities and activities offered by today's senior living communities, there's no time to be bored. Senior housing offers everything from field trips and outdoor excursions to fitness and personal enrichment classes. There are even unusual types of assisted living communities that cater to specific tastes—imagine living on or near a college campus and taking lifelong learning to its ultimate extreme!

5. I'll Drain All Of My Finances

Yes, senior living can seem financially daunting; no doubt about that. But if you're already thinking about how to afford assisted living, you're ahead of the game. With savvy financial planning—and maybe a little help from Social Security or VA benefits—senior living can sometimes come out to the same cost as living at home. If you factor in home health care, senior living communities just might cost less than staying at home.

6. I'm Afraid that Strangers Won't Take Good Care of Me / I'll Be Neglected

There's far more to senior living than the stereotype of adult children dropping off their elderly parents with strangers. When it's time for assisted living, the process of decision-making should involve the entire family, and your older loved one should be just as comfortable with their new home as you are moving them there. Family should maintain regular contact with senior loved ones, particularly in the weeks after they first move. Remember, too, that your loved one will be well cared for: good senior living homes are staffed by professionals who are experts on senior care, and can offer more advanced care if it's called for. Neglect and elder abuse is a crime, and you can avoid it by finding a legitimate, licensed senior community.

7. I Won't Be Able to Control My Daily Life and Activities

Moving to a new residence, letting go of long-held habits of daily life—these are often realities of getting older, but they can be difficult and require major adjustment. Take your loved one's concerns seriously and don't minimize their feelings, says HelpGuide.org. The fact is, assisted living can be a necessary and freeing step for both seniors and their families. If it is already too difficult for a senior to care for herself independently, or for caregivers to provide the necessary help, then assisted living may be a good option. The emphasis is on safety and security, but also independence and privacy, enabling each resident to have the care they need without compromising individual dignity.