

Senior *Living*

The Ultimate Guide



Senior Care Options
Understood

Senior Care Options:

*The Ultimate Guide to Senior Care
Options for Your Loved Ones.*

Introduction

Age catches up with everybody, and there comes a time when we need to determine the ultimate location for our senior loved ones. Before a decision is made on where and what is more suitable for them, consideration of each available option should be taken. This always requires the help and ideas of other family members and even the seniors themselves. Factors such as their health condition and whether they will need medical assistance, need for companionship, memory care or something more will help in deciding what option is more suitable for them and the urgency of the care.

There are various types of senior care; this book will focus on the following care options: Homecare, assisted living, nursing home, memory care, adult day care and senior housing.

When an elderly family member falls ill and can no longer live alone, the question of what to do comes up from family and friends. It is a hard conversation to have for most families and rightfully so. It is best to consider all the options in these situations. Think about nursing homes, assisted living centers, live-in care or having your loved one move in with a family member.

Many elderly people have over a dozen pills they take daily. Is your loved one able to care for their daily medical needs such as pill taking? What about cooking meals and cleaning the house, getting dressed and taking showers? Consider these when making a decision about their future care and support.

Nursing homes can provide lots of socialization and medical care options that no other living situation does. Unfortunately, nursing homes are also expensive. If you're loved one does not have money saved up for this emergency situation, you will likely have to assume debt to make the transition to a nursing home possible.

When considering options, think about what your loved one needs help with and what they can do for themselves. For instance, an assisted living facility provides community and medical support but with much more freedom and independence than a nursing home. There are also lots of kinds of assisted living facilities so you can choose what level of support, care and freedom are right for your loved one.

Having a live-in medical care professional move into your loved one's house is often an ideal option. The benefits are many. Your loved one will be allowed to stay in their home and avoid the suffering and stress of moving.

Live-in care options also let you customize and personalize the care your loved one needs. For instance, you can create the aide's schedule on your own. Having the same assistant day after day will also help the continuity and effectiveness of the care provided. Often, the live-in aide becomes a good friend of both the patient as well as the patient's circle of family and friends.

If one of your family members or close friends has space, energy and will to have your loved one move into their household, this can be another great situation for elderly care. While this option still requires a move, the patient stays within the familiar when moving into a family member's or friend's home. The sense of belonging so often lost in nursing homes is maintained.

There are numerous options when it comes to choosing how to care for an ailing loved one. Regardless of whether the news is a surprise or an expected announcement, don't lose hope that there will be a solution that fits your situation and wallet. Your loved one deserves what will make them happiest and healthier, whether that is a traditional nursing home, a live-in care provider or moving in with a relative.

Moreover, this book will look into the level of care that should be accorded to the seniors during each level of care.

Thanks for downloading this book. It's my firm belief that it will provide you with all the answers to your Senior Care Options questions.

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Chapter 1: Understanding Senior Housing Options

Let's take a look at some of the very best options in senior housing and why these are well worth knowing about.

Luxury retirement homes are, in fact, awe-inspiring to those who are introduced to them whether this is reluctantly or not. The pages of Comfort Life magazine are full of stories of seniors who "didn't know that places like this existed." Some of the astonishing features you might find in residences like these might include an indoor golf green, onsite fitness center, golf course nearby (or even onsite), onsite pub, fine dining served by a gourmet chef, and a variety of other luxury amenities which are really only limited only by one's imagination.

Affording the best senior care

The fact is that these homes can offer so much because there is a lot of money saved by seniors who live in a 'village' where there is everything they could ever want. Many seniors exclaim "I didn't realize I could afford this" until they took a closer look at their finances.

Some of the happy surprises seniors find when they look at what they might be able to afford include:

- how much their house is worth on today's market
- how much money they can save without a car or the need for transportation
- how costly and inconvenient it is to eat in restaurants as often as many seniors end up doing.

These savings can add up to thousands of dollars a month, and it suddenly occurs to seniors that they can afford more than they first might have thought.

Superb senior care is also available in other options. Here is a look at what to consider as you search for the very best senior care.

Active adult living homes allow you to remain mainly independent while in a community with peers who share similar interests.

Long-term care homes offer extended care, often around-the-clock care whenever it is required for the elderly. Many long-term care retirement homes also offer a focus on Alzheimer's Disease care.

There are also options regarding ownership, including rental, lease or full ownership.

When thinking of entering a retirement home, you are not restricted to renting a suite in the closest seniors' complex. In fact, taking a closer look at all your options can open you up to a whole new world of choices that you may, in fact, find hard to resist. Don't dismiss retirement homes because you looked at one (with only one set of options) and didn't like it. You may be cutting yourself off from an excellent, unique experience.

Chapter 2: Senior Home Care

What is Senior Home Care?

When an elderly person gets to the point where they can no longer complete their daily activities, they may qualify for senior home care. The term senior home care covers a wide variety of medical services, which cover a wide range of expertise, training, and expense.

It can be complicated to choose a provider for senior home care. Some care providers can administer various medical treatment, but others may not have actual medical training and are more able to help an elderly person with other activities, such as bathing, preparing meals, and cleaning.

A care provider may perform basic tasks such as these, as well as helping to keep their charge entertained. The caregiver may, for example, take the client out to run errands or visit family, or take them for short walks around their neighborhood or assist with day to day tasks.

Benefits of Senior Home Care

One of the most basic mindsets behind providing home care for you or a loved one is simply the idea of being proactive in one's health. As you become older, some simple tasks get more difficult and thus more dangerous. That may lead someone to investigate senior home care options solely to identify what some preventative tactics are, so that if something should happen, someone is on call.

The next mindset is worrying about you or a loved one's ability to cope with new forms of diseases. For instance, if one has diabetes as is common to develop in old age, they have to monitor their heart rate, their insulin intake, and even what kinds of foods they are dining on.

Finally, there are also issues of what is called behavioral health. With old age, there often comes phases or waves of forgetfulness, of dementia, of depression, or even just basic loneliness. If there is a senior home care service around that can specialize in either identifying the signs of such behavioral health, you are one step closer to being able to possibly treat your symptoms or the symptoms of someone you deeply care for.

When one is on the lookout for senior home care, the fastest place to gather results is to do so over the Internet. As a quick rule of thumb, if someone in a customer review mentions an issue, highlight it in your mind, and if it comes up again in another person's review, it is probably a recurrent theme of that service provider, and thus not what you are looking for.

As an example, if a company is being called unprofessional more than once, then they are probably unprofessional, even in small ways, which count on these sorts of Internet queries.

Overall, it is most important to be thankful for those coming to care for you or your loved one. If you work at building an appreciated relationship with a senior home care provider, you increase the level of trust on both sides. In times of duress, it is going to be the trust you have with a provider that makes you feel calmer and more prepared for whatever lies ahead.

Chapter 3: Seniors Assisted Living and its benefits

Assisted living for seniors is the middle ground in-between a regular home and a nursing home.

Staff members working in an assisted home are trained to help seniors, but to avoid becoming too intrusive. Residents that live in these homes are usually capable of managing their lives, perhaps even walking around without assistance. These homes also allow for more privacy and space than the traditional nursing home.

At the same time, assisted living for seniors homes provide support services and regular supervision. These homes may vary in the level of supervision they provide. Some homes offer 24-hour supervision comparable to nursing homes. Others may provide daily or semi-daily visits from staff members.

Some of the activities that an assisted living home may offer include: getting around the house, eating, dressing, grooming, toileting and bathing. A senior will be offered help by staff, but will also be allowed to perform daily tasks on his/her own.

Though not all homes will provide constant, round-the-clock service, daily contact is a requirement. In addition to fulfilling basic needs, assisted living for seniors also provides community activities. Field trips, social gatherings, easy sports games--all of these activities can be beneficial for keeping a senior's spirits up! It's important for a person to be part of a community; this is an important part of the human instinct!

Assisted living facilities do not provide medical care, and this is the primary difference between a nursing home and an assisted living home. These homes can have certain health care services provided; however, these facilities can only provide non-skilled nursing care and non-medical services.

Obviously, this means that individuals who live in such a facility cannot have a critical medical condition. Most of the patients will require little to no medical care. The advantages are that these homes offer more personal privacy and autonomy than nursing homes, for patients who are in moderately good health.

Assisted living homes are popular alternatives to nursing homes not only because of the independence issue but also because they are less expensive in comparison. The medical care, not to mention the constant supervision, inflates the price of running a nursing home, and thus inflates your costs.

Busting Senior Assisted Living Myths

One of the issues Forbes stressed was "One of the problems is communicating the illusion that they (assisted living facilities) provide 24-hour care." As the chapter goes on to point out, however, "This is one of the biggest differences between assisted living and a skilled nursing facility: mandated supervision." Guests who require round-the-clock nursing care should be placed in a skilled nursing facility, not a senior assisted living home.

That doesn't mean that seniors in assisted living will be totally left to take care of themselves. They will be provided with assistance in bathing, dressing, walking, eating and toileting but they won't receive regular skilled observation by a nurse. It's all a matter of semantics. And while seniors and their family members should arm themselves with as much information as possible before making a living choice, a top-notch facility will help them in making the right decision.

In fact, many senior living homes provide both assisted living and nursing options. Their staff members include professionals who will sit down with you one on one, get to know your personal situation and then make a recommendation for the kind of care you or your loved one will require. They are there to put your mind at ease and to set to rest all those horror stories that are swirling around in your head. The number one goal should always be a safe, secure and comfortable environment that provides residents with the highest quality of life.

A companion Forbes piece outlined the "Lessons We Can Learn From Frontline's Exposé of Assisted Living," which offered extremely sound advice. Some of the recommendations made therein were:

Understand what services it does, and does not provide.

- Take the time to pick the brains of the senior admissions specialists you meet with.
- Ask them all the pertinent questions. Don't leave anything out.
- Do you or your loved one have any limitations?
- Is forgetfulness starting to become an issue?
- This is not the time to be shy or embarrassed about your situation.

Regulatory trade-offs. - The regulations on assisted living vary widely from state to state. If you don't know what your state mandates, it behooves to familiarize yourself.

If you have a bad feeling about a place, leave. - Trust your gut instincts. First impressions do matter. A senior living facility should be warm, welcoming and inviting. It should feel like home. After all, that's precisely what it is going to be once you move in. Don't wait until it's too late to find out it's anything but.

Chapter 4: Senior Nursing Home

Why senior nursing home?

Moving into a nursing home is a momentous decision. As parents or loved one's age, it sometimes becomes more difficult for them to live independently. Illness, fall, or injury may leave an elderly person with physical or mental challenges. The death of a spouse can leave even an independent senior feeling lonely, confused, and lost. Age can make the day-to-day responsibilities of keeping up a house, paying bills, arranging medical appointments, and even running errands seem overwhelming.

Although the adjustment of moving into a nursing home can be a challenge for some seniors, the benefits are undeniable. Living with others of their own age gives many elderly folks a renewed sense of comfort, as well as opportunities to socialize. Prepared meals and housekeeping support means there's no need to worry about cooking, shopping, and heavy cleaning. The worries of maintenance and lawn care are eased. The resident is free to pursue their favorite activities, engaging with friends, and enjoying life. There are some milestones that may indicate that it's time to make the transition into long-term care.

Quality of Life is Declining

If a parent or loved one is struggling to meet their own everyday needs, it may be a good time to broach the subject of long-term care. Seniors who need assistance with dressing, bathing, cooking, or other tasks can receive the support they need, relieving the burden on caregivers. Whether the forgetfulness often associated with age, or physical challenges are presenting problems, around-the-clock care may be the right choice if a loved one is struggling with basic personal care tasks.

Caregivers are Feeling Overwhelmed

Caring for an elderly parent or relative can be exhausting. Even the most loving caregivers are sometimes overwhelmed by the demands on their time, attention, and physical stamina. Adult children caring for their parents are sometimes referred to as the "sandwich generation." They're caught between the responsibilities of caring for their own houses and families, and their elderly parents, too. Moving a parent into assisted living not only improves the quality of life for the senior, it often relieves much of the burden of guilt that comes with being torn between being a caregiver while handling the responsibilities of family and a career.

Recovery From an Illness or Injury—Transitional Care

Not all nursing home residents require long-term care. Illness or injury may leave a senior in need of temporary support. Physical therapy and medication management are available on site, helping to speed up the healing process. More

comfortable and relaxed than a hospital, and offering 24-hour medical support, a nursing home can be an excellent option for convalescence. Short-term care is a popular, cost-saving option for residents who will transition back to their own homes after surgery, illness, or injury.

Transitioning into a nursing home is an excellent choice for seniors who are no longer fully comfortable with living on their own. Whether the resident is seeking short-term recovery care, or long-term residency, it's a change that can provide increased comfort and quality of life.

Five Tips on Helping Seniors Transition Into a Nursing Home

When the time comes and family members are no longer able to provide the care and support an aging parent needs, it is important to consider the best methods of helping a loved one make a smooth transition into a nursing home. This can be a difficult moment for many seniors because it means a loss of their ability to make many decisions for themselves. It is also a time where they will be making a major lifestyle transition at a time when they are already vulnerable and likely suffering with health issues. Fortunately, there are some tips on how family and nursing home staff can help make this transition as easy as possible for the elderly.

1. Give them Options

As much as possible, include the aging patient in any decisions that need to be made. This can include having input regarding the facility or nursing home as well as other important decisions that will need to be made. This is often a time when the elderly need to think about selling the home they have lived in for many years, be sure they are informed of the entire process and give them a chance to feel like they are still in control of these issues.

2. Allow them to Maintain their Dignity

Moving into a senior nursing home is often the time when seniors begin to lose control over their daily lives. A person who has spent decades taking care of others and being productive is now in a position where they need to rely on others. Offering them the ability to do as much as they can for themselves is an important part of showing respect and allowing them to feel more involved.

3. Make Visits Something to Look Forward To

Life in a nursing home can get mundane and boring if there is never an opportunity for interaction with loved ones. Be sure to set up regular visiting times that the resident can look forward to. These visits are important and should be a priority, so try and ensure that you are able to maintain this contact.

Visits can be a great time to bring in other family members, grandchildren, great grandchildren and even friends. Make it a time to relax and enjoy each others company. Share news, pictures and other information that will keep the elderly in touch and up-to-date with the life of family and friends.

4. Follow Their Adjustment Carefully

When visiting a senior who is trying to adjust to their move into a nursing home, be sure to speak with staff members to get a feel for how the adjustment is progressing. Address any issues early on and allow the person to express their feelings, fears, anxieties and desires. Often times, working through this adjustment period can be a process that involves good communication on all sides.

5. Help Them to Feel at Home

If the nursing home allows for personal effects, be sure to bring along some of the items that will bring the new resident a sense of comfort. It might be a favorite robe and slippers, a clock, favorite coffee mug and other such items. While keeping valuables in a nursing home is not a good idea, the items that bring the most comfort are often inexpensive, but sentimental.

Chapter 5: Senior Memory Care

Memory Care Facilities Provide Support for Seniors

As someone ages, their body becomes weaker. They may experience pain in their joints, failing eyesight, and the mind may also show bouts of forgetfulness. However, all of these problems may not be that serious, depending on the individual senior's condition. It can be treated if the proper care is provided.

Problems like memory loss, Alzheimer's disease, or dementia can be difficult conditions. None of them can be cured. All of these diseases require proper care and attention to help seniors and their families cope. It is often difficult for many families to adapt to their loved one's new condition.

Alzheimer's disease is a form of dementia that progresses with time. It eventually requires 24-hour care and supervised assistance from trained individuals. Even though many families try to take care of their loved ones by themselves, conditions often tend to worsen. This then becomes a struggle for many families to keep up with the care. Many families choose to help their loved ones transition to a memory care facility where they can live their golden years comfortably and healthily.

The living environment for seniors with memory loss should be secured; this is important because the care staff needs to keep an eye on their activities and movements. The seniors living at the facility often require help with bathing, grooming, medication, and performing daily tasks. The staff at the care facility is trained so that they can cater to the long-term needs of the patients.

People with this condition often find it difficult to deal with daily problems and they may find it difficult to control their emotions. According to the National Institute on Aging, this is a progressive process that slowly destroys a person's memory and thinking skills. Although there is no definitive cure for this condition, having a trained set of hands to look after seniors can help them to

maintain a life where they have a certain level of independence at a facility for memory care.

When a family is looking for the proper facilities for memory care, they often can judge the services and facilities for themselves, by putting themselves in the shoes of their loved ones. It is always advisable for families to compare two or more care units, so that they can choose which one will satisfy the needs of the senior. The right memory care facility offers seniors the chance for social interaction, recreation, participating in activities, and instilling a sense of achievement and normalcy for those who require the care.

Memory loss is a complicated issue that requires high-quality care so that life may be bearable for the seniors affected. The responsibility of the facility is nurturing the senior so they can understand the needs of the individual. This way, the staff can help seniors when they know what their patients need. Many facilities offer a personalized plan to incorporate the requirements and needs of the individual senior.

Once families know they have chosen the right memory care center, they can rest assured with the peace of mind knowing that their loved ones are being well taken care of. It is integral to a senior's health that the best care facility is chosen, so their needs can be met and they are supported with care and compassion.

What to Look for in a Memory Care Facility?

Caring for a loved one with memory loss, Alzheimer's disease or any other types of dementia requires a commitment to cope each day with patience, compassion, and flexibility. If any factors is missing, then you are not capable of handling the memory care support required by these disorders. Such are the reasons why seniors diagnosed with different forms of memory impairments should be placed in a memory care facility where skilled personnel can give the maximum quality of care patients need.

What to look for in facilities that specialize in memory care?

Compassionate staff

More than just skills, it calls for a compassionate caregiver. Seniors who are struck with memory impairment such as Alzheimer's disease need specialized care, especially in the advanced and late stages of the disease. The workforce at the facility should not only concern themselves from assisting residents with their ADL (Activities of Daily Living) but as much as possible, go an extra mile in getting to know each person so that they could provide them personalized care.

Compassionate caregivers provide a patient with a security blanket, someone he or she could rely on and cling to for survival. Needless to say, this quality of a memory care facility is very hard to determine. Many claim such existence in their facility, but you need to validate it through testimonials and personal assessment.

Programs

Facilities should be equipped with programs from mild memory problems to the advanced stage of dementia, offering a fresh and effective approach to creating a friendly and pleasant environment for the residents. Programs should include ways of maintaining the dignity and individuality of each resident. The facility should also have plans for multi-sensory experiences, daily exercise, group activities, organized outings and other activities which they deem would benefit each senior. The physical health and well-being of every individual should be monitored with nutritious meals and snacks served daily. There should also be hydration program that ensures seniors drink enough water and juice daily. A good memory care facility should encourage seniors to participate in activities like gardening, sewing, household chores and other undertakings that promote multi-sensory knowledge.

Programs for early signs

Facilities offering this kind of assistance should also have programs for seniors diagnosed with the early stage of Alzheimer's disease or other dementia. Elders experiencing the early onset of memory impairment should seek memory care

immediately to take advantage of the treatment and activities that help delay the advancement of the disease.

Amenities

Apart from staff and programs of memory care facilities, they should also offer amenities essential for residents' comfortable and safe life.

- Living spaces designed to help memory-impaired residents function as independently as possible
- Comfortable community areas such as dining room, media room, guest room for family visits
- Emergency calls response and fire safety systems
- Secured walking paths
- Regular wellness visits by registered nurse
- Regular housekeeping and laundry
- Concierge

Memory loss, Alzheimer's disease, and other dementia are wrenching occurrences a senior can experience. Choosing a memory care facility that's best for your loved one is a great challenge. Offer your loved ones the advantage of memory care in a facility that could provide them professional and empathetic attention.

Chapter 6: Adult Day Care

Adult day care, a community-based program designed to meet the needs of functionally impaired adults through an individual plan of care, is composed of 5-8 hours of care programming including door-to-door transportation and lunch for adults 18 and over. It is a program made to serve adults who may be physically impaired, who may have some form of dementia, and who may need special supervision, increased social opportunities, assistance with personal care or other activities of daily living.

Senior citizens, wheelchair bound or ambulatory, may not as yet require the services provided by a nursing home; a day center very likely, will be all the support necessary for these individuals. Thus, adult day care meets the needs of the frail elderly and provides a cost efficient alternative to institutionalization.

Professional nurses can have a tremendous impact on society in adult day care. By daily evaluation of the frail elderly, nurses can recognize and interpret the signs of a potential medical problem and often prevent a medical emergency.

Many states now provide a Medicaid Waiver which allows people to stay in their homes; grant money and Veterans benefits are also available for various senior care services. As a options are reviewed for senior care, families will need to check with their individual state programs to determine what benefits are available for senior care.

The demand for these centers continues to grow. It is estimated that by the year 2020, our nation's elderly population will increase to over 53 million.

In this complex world, where our technologies may sometimes compromise our ideologies, there are some justifiable concerns about the quality and quantity of care being received by our frail elderly. Whereas with adult medical day care, the frail elderly can obtain the medical and social assistance they require, and the cost savings pressures of managed care and downsizing may be satisfied.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Finally after reviewing all the available options in senior care, it is now time to get down and choose what is the best and what suits your loved one. We have mentioned a number of senior housing types from assisted living care, home care, day care, retirement communities, or nursing homes.

It is always important to ensure that whatever the option you choose, it should be well accepted by the elder who will be affected by the decision. We all love our parents and other seniors in our families and all we want for them is to enjoy their old age. Best wishes as you look out for the what suits your need!

Thanks for downloading this book. It's my firm belief that it will provide you with all the answers to your Senior Care Options questions.