



Discussing Lifestyle Changes with Your Parents

When

Many people wait until a "life event" occurs to face the prospect of moving into a senior community. Not only does that create a need to educate yourselves and your parents during a typically emotional time, but your choices are fewer. Learning about available options and planning ahead are invaluable gifts to both you and your aging parents.

Perhaps you are noticing changes in your parents...

Bills, conversations with friends and normally enjoyable activities are being skipped...

Meals, medications and appointments are missed...

Perhaps a mood shift, weight change or difficulty moving about is becoming apparent...

The house is unusually messy or dirty...

They are wearing the same clothes day after day and avoiding showers or baths.

If you see two or more of these changes, it is time to consider a safer, healthier and happier environment for your parents. It's time for you to learn everything you can about living options to discuss different arrangements with your parents.

What

A wide selection of living arrangements are possible. If your parents are able to care for themselves, they may want to consider Independent Living housing. The Independent or Active Living communities may or may not have additional levels of care on their campus. They may require an Entrance Fee and monthly fee or just a monthly fee. They can be for-profit or not-for-profit.

Your parents may also wish to hire "a la carte services" for transportation, meals, housekeeping, home maintenance, physical therapy, etc. so they can stay in their own home. This may work for a while but may not be a good long-term strategy.

The next level of care, Assisted Living, followed by a slightly higher level of care, Shelter Care, provides assistance with the activities of daily living. That could include bathing, dressing, meal preparation, medication reminders, transportation and more. Assisted living communities generally offer apartments and three meals a day plus a full program of recreational and cultural pursuits. Most of these communities are managed by for-profit companies and charge a monthly fee as well as for individual services.

Skilled nursing facilities offer the highest level of care. Residents do not need to leave the building to visit a doctor and medical personnel is always on site. Medication administration, meals, physical and mental stimulation, grooming and social activities are monitored by trained staff.

Where

Once you have selected the types of living arrangements you wish to discuss with your parents, there are a few more things to consider...

- Proximity to you or other loved ones
- Levels of care offered
- Size and age of community
- State inspection results
- Activities, amenities, services
- Cost
- How the community "feels" to you and your parents

These broad descriptions are the "facts" about living options. Every choice has its own strengths and weaknesses and it is your parents who should ultimately make the final decision. Provide them with information you have gathered; stay positive but express your concerns. Do not pressure them. Not only will it usually not end well, it can harm your relationship with your parents. Instead, you may decide it is time to call upon a trusted advisor to further discuss your parent's needs.

At the Danish Home, we know there is a lot to learn and consider. We are here to help you navigate through the choices and decisions you and your parents need to make so they will live happy, enriched lives for as long as possible.

If you have questions, please call (773) 775-7383 during normal business hours or email us at contact@danishhomeofchicago.com