

“FOR BOOMERS ONLY”

Edition #5

THE TRANSITION

When our Baby Boomer clients and their loved ones finally reach the decision that it would be best for Mom to move to a full-service community, they typically enter into an entirely new universe of issues. Whether Mom will be relocating from the family home or a condo in Florida, the transition itself will always be traumatic.

In our effort to prepare our Baby Boomer family for the reality of managing these transitional matters, we have focused on a number of the most common issues and the manner in which many of our residents have addressed these issues. First of all, it is essential that the family understand how potentially confusing and discomfoting the transition can be for your loved one. Consider your Mom’s perspective on the issues.

- 1. The uncertainty of what will happen when she leaves an environment that she knows and in which she is generally comfortable.***
- 2. The fear of dealing with real estate agents, movers, utility companies, etc.***
- 3. The hassle of choosing the exact items which will be most important to her in her future life and getting rid of those furnishings, accessories, clothing, etc. that are no longer worth keeping.***
- 4. The challenge of having to have herself and the home constantly groomed during the selling process.***
- 5. The challenge, at her age, of meeting new people and making new friends.***

While these concerns are usually much less of a challenge if your Mom is already living in a condominium or townhome, they will always exist in some form or fashion. At Parc Communities, we have found those families that are most proactive in addressing the transitional issues are invariably the ones which are most satisfied. The following are a number of our most recommended strategies:

- A. It is never too early to begin reminding Mom how comfortable she will be when she is able to shed the responsibilities of home ownership. What most families attempt to do is to focus on those two or three areas of independent senior living that are most likely to be a real issue in their Mom’s life. Whether it is the fact that she will meet new friends, will have somebody else preparing her meals, will not have to deal with maintenance, or will soon be getting into a regular exercise program, the family should continually reinforce those few issues that are most relevant in their family.

The very best way to get your Mom over the anxiety associated with leaving her home is to focus your efforts on expediting the process. As long as you are able to establish clear goals and get her to buy into the program, you will ensure that she does not have time to develop “Buyer’s Remorse.” As emphasized in each of our previous “For Boomers Only” letters, delay is always your family’s worst enemy.

B. Approximately half of our residents wait until they sell their current home before moving into a Parc community. The other half move into the community, then let their family and real estate agents deal with the issues surrounding the sale of their home. To a person, those who move first into the community are the most satisfied. The reasons are simple:

1. *They are able to physically distance themselves from the unpleasantness associated with the selling process.*
2. *They are able to more effectively delegate the transitional responsibilities to the family members and professionals.*

C. The whole issue of “downsizing” is a prominent concern for your loved one, but it shouldn’t be. Numerous studies support the reality that people actually become more comfortable with less and less space as they grow older. Our Parc Communities’ residents, most of whom have moved from large homes, will readily attest to this fact. Rather than being defensive about “downsizing,” your family must accentuate all of the benefits of living in a cozier and more manageable space.

One of the greatest benefits attributable to moving into a Parc community before selling the existing home is what we jokingly refer to as “**junk management.**” The strategy is elegant in its simplicity:

1. *Mom selects the apartment home that is best suited for her needs.*
2. *Mom and her “Boomer” children then select only those items in Mom’s existing home that are important enough to move into her Parc Communities home.*
3. *The family decorates Mom’s new home with important pieces and accessories.*
4. *Mom moves into her new home at a Parc community and is surrounded by furnishings that she has grown to cherish.*
5. *Mom brings only clothes, shoes, etc. that she routinely wears.*
6. *Everything left in the old home remains in place until the home is sold.*
7. *By the time the old home sells, Mom doesn’t have the slightest thought about all of that old “junk.” The kids can now do with the “junk” as they please.*

D. Oftentimes, the most important burden that your family can lift from Mom by encouraging her to move into a Parc community before she places her home on the market is the anxiety of always needing to be ready for a potential showing. In a world that finds tranquility in the predictable and repeatable, the need for your Mom to keep herself and her home constantly presentable can have debilitating results.

If Mom moves first into a Parc community, your family will generally need to play an active role in dealing with listing agents and other transitional-related matters, but your willingness to do so will ensure that your Mom enters her new lifestyle with a positive attitude.

- E. If you Mom, like many, is wary of the prospect of meeting and making new friends at this point in her life, your family must help her to focus on the happiness that her past friendships have brought to her. One visit to a Parc community will illustrate to her how much our residents interact with one another and how much obvious joy they bring to one another.

What is almost impossible to imagine, but what invariably happens, is that our existing residents embrace the newcomers. Within a matter of days, our new residents feel like they are truly at home. This factor, above all others, is what sets apart a Parc community from any other type of senior housing.

As always, your willingness to be proactive in encouraging your Mom to do what it is clearly in her best interest can have a profound and long-term impact on her well being. By turning her anxieties about the transition into the hope of a new adventure, you can not only improve her state of mind but also prepare her to embrace the remainder of her life with great anticipation.