



Moving Elderly Relatives

The time may come when it will be necessary for you to move an elderly family member from their own home to another type of accommodation. Depending on your relative's state of health and finances, the options generally fall into three categories:

FOR THE ACTIVE SENIOR - RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES

Retirement communities include condos, land-lease properties or homeownership of detached/semi detached homes, townhouses or apartments. There are usually recreational facilities in place in a planned community type setting.

FOR THE LESS ACTIVE SENIOR - RETIREMENT HOMES

Retirement homes are small apartments or bed-sitting type accommodations. Meals are available in a communal dining room although some residents can prepare light meals in their own unit if it is equipped with the proper appliances. Recreational activities are also available within the complex. Nursing staff is usually available on site with physicians on an on-call basis.

FOR SENIORS REQUIRING CARE - NURSING HOMES

Nursing homes are private or shared room accommodations with 24 hour nursing staff available. Recreational activities that contribute to a healthy and enriching lifestyle are available on site such as crafts, physiotherapy, etc.

Finding the right accommodation can be a time consuming and sometimes difficult task. Nursing homes in particular often have waiting lists. If the person in question is not involved in the choice of residence, it is very important to be sensitive to the impact this move will have on your relative. Take extra time to listen to their concerns. Depending on how much space they will have in the new residence, help them to choose an appropriate number of special pieces of furniture and keepsakes to accompany them. Ask for their opinion before discarding belongings and honour their wishes as to how some items are to be distributed among family members or to worthy charities.

If your relative is moving into a non-assisted living type arrangement, offer assistance in making the moving arrangements and help them with sorting and any self-packing. Offer to let them stay at your home before and during the move to help alleviate the stress and emotions that moving will bring. Be there for delivery and assist in setting up and putting away their belongings. Help them get acquainted with their new community; take them for a drive around their new area, have lunch at a local restaurant, take them shopping. Moving will be a big life change, even for an active senior.

Some useful internet resources for seniors in Canada include:

<http://www.seniors.gc.ca/eng/index.shtml>

www.seniorsearch.com

www.thecareguide.com

