



INTRODUCTION

Having helped more than a thousand families negotiate housing transitions with their aging parents, "We need help!" is the plea I've heard most often.

*"We need help deciding when and how to move Mom
to her new apartment."*

"We need help figuring out what to do with all of Mom and Dad's stuff."

*"We need help getting Dad settled while keeping our sanity
and family relationships intact!"*

This book is packed with tried and true techniques and concepts that have helped countless other families, just like yours, navigate these scary waters. In this book, you'll learn how to:

- Identify your senior's current and future needs
- Form your moving team
- Plan the logistics (hiring movers, rental trucks, etc.)
- Identify priority furniture that will fit in the new space
- Identify priority objects (books, pictures, knickknacks, etc.)
- Dispose of what's left or divide it up among relatives

HOW TO EASILY MOVE AN AGING PARENT INTO THEIR NEXT HOME

- Make your senior's transition less emotionally taxing for them and for the move team

You can find tips for starting this conversation and process in my previous book, *Before the Time Comes: Conversations Family Caregivers Need to Have With Their Elderly Parents*. This book, *How to Easily Move an Aging Parent into Their Next Home . . . Like a Pro*, incorporates the same team approach for the actual move.

By following the steps in this book, you and your move team can break the huge, overwhelming chore of moving into a series of smaller, more easily handled tasks. By making sure everyone on the team understands and agrees to their roles and responsibilities, and by making sure the support of your loved one remains your primary goal, you'll be able to plan and execute this move with a minimum of stress and trauma.

Remember, hundreds of thousands of families just like yours make this move every year, successfully settling their beloved seniors into new, safe, and healthy living spaces. You can do it too.

This book will help you do just that.



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

OVERVIEW

This book presents you with several ways to get engaged with the material presented. Emotional learners will appreciate the family dynamics presented in **conversation** mode. Detail-oriented individuals may gravitate to the **worksheet** display at the end of each chapter. And for individuals who learn by doing, the **process** approach describes specific procedures to follow. Read each chapter thoughtfully in your quest to accomplish the best move for your senior.

For simplicity, in this book, **“Mom”** is identified as the primary senior who is moving. Situations involving Mom are included throughout the book. This approach is particularly helpful in the conversation presentations. You can easily replace the word Mom with “Dad,” “Mom and Dad,” or “Aunt Judy,” etc., as appropriate.

CONVERSATION

Each chapter opens with a theoretical conversation reflecting a real-life situation between family members. Most conversations are memoir-based; some of these stories, however, are fictional. Small but pertinent learning points are included in these conversations, useful kernels of information to help you and your senior.

PROCESS

The intent of each process section is to guide you regarding what to do and why to do things in a certain way. At times, the suggestions are about what *not* to do and why. And sometimes, examples are the best way to present ideas that will help you move your loved one with the least amount of friction.

WORKSHEET

Each chapter ends with a checklist or spreadsheet, which puts the most pertinent information into a quick review format. Make copies as needed for each team member.

CONCLUSION

Together, these components give you an overview of each chapter's key points and get you ready to transition your senior and your family comfortably, efficiently, and lovingly into the next stage of your lives.

Are you ready?



CHAPTER 1

THE WELL-PLANNED, WELL-EXECUTED SENIOR MOVE

A conference call is set up among six siblings to discuss the current crisis with Mom, their senior loved one. For clarity, the siblings are identified by location within the United States: VA, CA, TX, CO, and FL; in the conversation, HOME is the local caregiver for Mom, who has fallen for a second time in the last year.

HOME: When Mom didn't answer the phone yesterday, I went over to the house and found her on the floor by the front door.

FL: I've decided to move in with her for a while.

TX: Really! That's a big deal.

FL: I know.

CO: I can't see her agreeing to leave the house. Are you sure you can live with Mom?

VA: I don't see how she's going to be able to do the stairs much longer.

CA: . . . or go upstairs to the bathroom.

HOW TO EASILY MOVE AN AGING PARENT INTO THEIR NEXT HOME

VA: *Do you think we could build a ramp outside the back door?*

HOME: *I've been checking on putting a half bath on the main level. I am afraid she might fall down the stairs.*

CA: *(gasping) Gosh! She fell down the stairs! Is she hurt?*

FL: *No, she **didn't** fall down the stairs. She slipped, that's all, and she's not hurt.*

HOME: *She said she spent the night on the floor because she couldn't get up by herself.*

TX: *I can see how that might be true. Do you believe her?*

HOME: *She only has a few bruises, so yes. I broke the chain on the front door to get inside, and then I helped her up.*

CO: *Glad you called. This is way too scary for me.*

FL: *Which is why I'm prepared to move in as her primary caregiver for a while. Let her stay in the house; since that's what she really wants.*

TX: *You mean until something happens, and we have to sell the house?*

HOME: *Well, I'm pretty tired of driving over to the house.*

Silence follows as everyone considers their thoughts and concerns.

FL: *(firmly) Mom is my responsibility until further notice. I'd like a break now and again. Could each of you plan to help me?*

CO: *I think that's more than fair.*

PROCESS

EXAMPLE OF A PERFECT MOVE

So much stress is involved in making any move. That stress level is easily double if you are moving a senior. The goal of my previous business was to make the stress of moving a senior manageable. In this book, I share stories and suggestions that help YOU navigate that process. Follow me on that journey.

THE WELL-PLANNED, WELL-EXECUTED SENIOR MOVE

Below is a glimpse into how a senior move might look:

When a client engaged me to move their senior, I arrived at the appointment with their quarter-inch scale floorplan on a clipboard. After showing it to the senior and the person in charge (defining who else is in charge is a critical step), I began to identify the furniture to be moved. By placing blue tape on each identified item, we moved through the living room and the master bedroom, making deliberate decisions with the senior's input. By the end of this process, the senior's shoulders were visibly relaxed, a sign of acceptance. Soon after, a firm moving date was set, and a contract was signed to do the move.

After completion of this planning step, the actual move was often a seamless accomplishment, done in one day.

The transition from stress to equanimity is what I hope to convey in this book. I firmly believe that you, too, can make your loved one comfortable by planning a one-day move—pack, move, and unpack. This most important day takes planning ahead of time, but *you can do it*.

THE WELL-PLANNED, WELL-EXECUTED SENIOR MOVE

Senior moves are different

Making the entire moving process for seniors efficient requires a different methodology than moving an able-bodied family or individual.

The move management system described in this book has evolved and been tested by moving over one thousand seniors to smaller living spaces (usually, one-bedroom apartments). The plan calls for one day to plan the move and one day to pack, move, and unpack the senior in their new place.

An overview of this streamlined moving process is presented in this chapter. Follow along as we lead a five-member family team to a successful relocation of their senior, within a timeframe suitable for everyone involved.

Embrace this new perspective on moving.

PRO TIP



Remember, at all times, the moving team includes the senior.

HELPFUL CONCEPTS

Yes, you have moved before, and your moving method may have worked just fine for you. But does it work for your stay-at-home senior? As you plan for a senior move, reducing stress, while taking care of a senior loved one, is your team's primary goal. Address the following concepts to help as you work together.

ANALYZE TIME REQUIREMENTS

Begin by picturing the end result of the move and working backwards.

How much time will the move take? Plan for a total of eight hours. If you decide to modify the plan, add an additional eight-hour day, no more.

How much time will the floor plan, space plan, and pre-plan for packing take? For these activities, set aside one day in the pre-move week and one hour for each activity.

Total time: Combining an eight-hour move day with a three-hour pre-planning day means you can set aside a minimum of three days and a maximum of one week as a comfortable amount of time to transition your loved one efficiently into the next stage of their lives.

STEP ONE - RESEARCH STAGE

OVERVIEW

How much time is needed to make a family team and family team decisions? Schedule an initial one-hour meeting for everyone who wants to be on the family team. As planning continues, add weekly meetings for progress updates. This time allotment varies for every family. One month is usually sufficient for most families.

PRO TIP



In crisis situations, set a timeline of no longer than one week for the move to assure your senior that all facets of the move are being addressed.

The Truck Decision – Use the Pros or DIY

Whether to hire a mover or rent a truck is an important determination that requires a long lead time to put into place. Research the best options available to your family team and share that information with everyone involved before making this decision.

Supplies

When planning the actual move: purchase reusable containers—large plastic bins and collapsible crates; prepare the tools you'll need—for taking beds apart and hanging pictures; and don't forget to have plenty of packing paper. Start your planning by reviewing the "Supplies" chapter and the extensive list provided there; then, choose what you need to have on hand.

Communication

Ask yourself: who needs to know what, and when do they need to know it? Make sure to let old and new neighbors, as well as family members, know about the senior's move. Professionals assisting your senior, such as CPAs and attorneys, may also want an update about the move, along with the new address for the senior. Check the senior's cell phone, email contact list, and any handwritten address books for persons who need to know about the senior's move.

Recruit staff members within the senior's new community as advisors during the move. Ask questions; accept advice.

STEP TWO – PLANNING STAGES

OVERVIEW

Planning is key for a senior move, so decide where and when, and then decide how. The new location and the move date are essential considerations as you plan. They should be nailed down well ahead of time.

Team Leader Plan

To make events flow smoothly, it's best to have one point of contact to guide the move, a Team Leader. Pick someone patient and firm for this role. Doing so makes the relocation process flow smoothly and allows decisions to be made more quickly.

Another important moving day requirement is that the senior leave the house with the Team Leader. This occurs shortly after the moving truck arrives. This step keeps the senior safe, both physically and mentally. But it also gives the senior time to participate in the excitement of moving day.

Remember, the most important person to consider during a senior move is the senior. Be sure to assign one person to care for your loved one exclusively on moving day (unless the Team Leader chooses to be this person). Emphasize to everyone involved that the senior is to be included in making all decisions and should be kept informed at all times. Answer any and all questions asked by a senior respectfully.

Rental Truck Plan

Well ahead of moving day, contract a twenty-foot to a twenty-six-foot moving truck with a ramp—and purchase or rent furniture pads, tie-downs, wardrobe boxes, and small boxes. Ask if the rental agency can place these items in your truck before you pick it up.

Floor Plan and Space Plan

Ahead of the move, create a furniture floorplan and a kitchen space-plan. These two simple plans define what is to be moved and where it will be moved. Incorporating these

THE WELL-PLANNED, WELL-EXECUTED SENIOR MOVE

two important steps ensures that your family team pulls off a successful move for your senior family member.

The furniture floorplan is created using a one-quarter-inch scale diagram of the new location and describes where specific pieces of furniture are to be placed after they are moved from the current house. Mark each furniture item in the current home with blue tape as you mark its corresponding place on the floor plan. When you finish labeling where each piece of furniture is to be placed, create a visual of the furniture plan so that everyone involved understands where each item will be located in the new home or apartment.

The kitchen space plan is created using similar logic. Simply mark what is moving and where it is going, then share the completed worksheet as a visual representation of the goal.

Packing with Unpacking in Mind

Plan to sort through the senior's belongings and items after moving everything to the new home. Do *not* sort during packing; sort while unpacking.

Document what's moving from the current home. Plan to use a camera for accuracy, so you can duplicate the placement of items in the new living space. Simplify packing by using collapsible crates for countertop items.

Prepare in advance to make packing tasks as efficient as possible.

STEP THREE - EXECUTION STAGE

OVERVIEW

Before moving day, review and fine-tune the tasks listed below, exploring the how and why of each step. Mentally visualize how each task is to be done. Use the checklists and spreadsheets provided at the end of each chapter to ensure that efficiency and organized action rule the day.

Packing Tips

Plan for two hours to pack up the senior's home on the day of the move. If necessary, plan to use the day before the move to pack fragile items from hutches and other shelves, etc. Use cellphone cameras to record the current location of all items so they can be placed in the correct spots in the new home; this is particularly important in dementia cases.

The following types of packing containers are the most useful for a senior move:

- Collapsible crates for items from the tops of nightstands, dressers, and end tables
- See-through plastic bins for items from the floors and shelves of closets
- Individual plastic bags to pack the internal contents of nightstands, dressers, and end tables
- Wardrobe boxes to transport hanging clothes

Designate one person to pack the living room and kitchen areas. Load the car that this person drives with living room crates, living room lamps, and kitchen bins.

Designate another person to pack the master bedroom and master bathroom. Load their car with bedroom closet bins, bedroom crates, and bedroom lamps. Place all bathroom bins and crates in the same car.

For a two-day move to a larger apartment, pack, move, and unpack bins at the new location on the first day. Set aside the crates packed with furniture contents; move them into out-of-the-way spots (like closets) at the new location on this same first day.

Load Truck

When loading the moving truck, keep the two-hour time goal in mind. Load wardrobe boxes last in order to unload them first at the new location. These concepts help to conserve time on this very busy day.

Unload Truck

Once the moving truck arrives at the new destination, designate one team member to review the prepared floorplan with the movers, directing them where to place furniture and boxes. Schedule the unloading of vehicles so that furniture pieces arrive in the first load, followed by crates and boxes. Continue to alternate loads in this manner until the moving truck is empty. Plan to set up the bed last after all furniture pieces have been put in their correct location. This method of unloading and set-up ensures the efficiency of the move.

Also, plan for elevator and entry door issues that can eat up a lot of time during moving day. And remember, collaboration and patience by everyone involved helps to make moving day flow more smoothly and effectively.

Unpacking Tips

Plan to unpack the senior's possession during the unloading process at the new location. While the movers are unloading the truck, the family team can unpack the bins and items they've transported in their vehicles. This organized approach keeps everyone focused and busy. Unpack wardrobe boxes as soon as they arrive. While unpacking, sort items as needed, placing donation and trash suggestions into separate bins. Don't throw anything away without permission.

Make it Feel Like Home

Once all items have been unpacked, remove empty boxes, bins, crates, and supplies from inside the new home/apartment to a designated location outside the entry door. After hanging one or two pictures on the walls, the family moving team is now ready for the senior to view the new apartment. The Team Leader and the senior can now be scheduled to arrive at a specified time—somewhere between 2:00 and 4:00 p.m. on moving day. It's important to note the senior's first impressions when they see their new home. Approval by the senior is the final requirement for a successful move.

In so many instances, the senior cries after seeing how completely you have included their input during this very important relocation event.

End of Move Responsibilities

After moving your loved one, make sure to clean up and make the senior's new home tidy. Remove moving supplies, take out the trash, and return borrowed items. If necessary, call the staff at the new living complex to release any elevators used and close building entry doors properly.

CONCLUSION

Planning well for a senior move and executing the required tasks are critical in making your senior's move efficient and successful. Whether you choose a DIY move or hire a moving company, the ideas presented here will help you plan optimally and give you peace of mind on your senior's moving day.



CHAPTER 2

MOVE FIRST

Some time has passed, and Mom is still living at home. However, she has fallen a third time and currently remains in the hospital for observation. The family team decides to take charge of the situation. The local team of HOME, FL, and VA set up a Zoom call to discuss the next step in caring for Mom. Should they move her first, or should the family team begin emptying Mom's house?

CA: I have to say, I'm not comfortable with moving Mom first. What are we going to do about all the stuff in the house?

CO: Could we have gotten rid of things before this happened?

HOME: (with a headshake) You know Mom wouldn't have cooperated. She hates throwing anything away.

CO: Do you remember when I tried to get rid of the stack of magazines by her recliner?

TX: Oh yeah. We all knew what a tripping hazard it was, but she was so pissed!

CO: She kept saying, "I haven't finished reading them yet."

FL: Do you think she can come back to the house?

HOME: I'm not sure, but they're evaluating her for a few weeks of outpatient rehab.

HOW TO EASILY MOVE AN AGING PARENT INTO THEIR NEXT HOME

CO: *(shrugging)* I think it's obvious. We'd better start planning a move.

CA: *But we need a few weeks to clear out the house first.*

FL: *What do you think she'll say when one of the neighbors tells her we're selling everything in the house?*

VA: *(shaking her head)* Every time I think about getting everything out of the house, I get sick to my stomach. I'm doing that for my father-in-law right now. It's too much.

TX: *Remember, Mom's already picked out a rehab center and an independent living community. Maybe it's time for her to make the move.*

CA: *Don't we need the money to help pay for her apartment? I know I can find someone to sell the house.*

VA: *I just have to say again, as her POA, there's enough money to take care of her for quite a while. I vote to go ahead with the move.*

HOME: *(hesitating)* I plan to bring Mom back to my house for a while if we want to plan an estate sale first.

TX: *I love going to estate sales and garage sales, but I think there's an awful lot of work involved in setting them up ourselves.*

CO: *Sorry. I'm past buying other people's things. I've lived with hand-me-downs and early-garage-sale decorating for long enough. I won't be much help with an estate sale.*

FL: *(teasingly)* Oh, you've always been so picky.

CA: *So, where are we?*

CO: *(glaring)* I just have one more thing to say. My research shows that the average net return on estate/garage sales is \$3,000. We need to factor that in before we decide. Obviously, I vote to do the move first.

TX: *(to HOME)* I appreciate the offer to keep Mom at your house for a while, but we can plan a sale any time. I vote to get Mom settled into her new community first.

HOME: *Sounds good to me. I'm glad we talked this out. Thanks, everybody.*

CO: *Just to be clear. We're planning the move, but we're still waiting on a timeline?*

Murmurs of agreement from all.

PROCESS

ASK QUESTIONS

Managing a senior's transition to a new situation requires asking the family team a few simple yet critical questions. Below are some important questions that can begin the process toward an eventual move.

Question One: What is the best way to take care of Mom?

Answer: Move her to a safe place where she can get the necessary and immediate help that is not available at her current home.

Question Two: What should be done about all her belongings at her current home?

Answer: It's best to leave many of the possessions Mom has accumulated over her lifetime at the house until a sensitive evaluation of her possessions can occur. Planning for disposal of items left behind can occur over the family team's chosen timeframe.

Question Three: How will the decision regarding moving Mom be made?

Answer: Whether to move Mom first or clear out her house first is a family team decision. After reviewing and discussing the following scenarios, specific details, and listed examples, your family team is ready to choose the preferred path.

MOVE MOM FIRST

Sometimes, especially in emergency situations, the family team may decide that a move *will* occur before cleaning out Mom's home. Being told that your loved one is not to be left alone is a very sobering development. If you've made a plan regarding moving Mom, as discussed in my book, *Before the Time Comes*, you'll be somewhat prepared for this inevitable move.

Once moving becomes a priority, making decisions is easier. The knowledge that items not moved to a new home are still at the previous house is a comfort to many seniors. When a senior says, "I forgot to bring such and such," locating an item can be handled by a family member. Having a family team with shared responsibility for Mom's well-being helps everyone involved in the move feel useful and included.

HOW TO EASILY MOVE AN AGING PARENT INTO THEIR NEXT HOME

Every senior move has one major goal: make the new place feel just like home for Mom. If the move is carried out correctly, once unpacking is complete, the senior knows where everything has been placed, and furniture has been arranged based on the senior's input. One of the benefits of the move-first option is that upon seeing the new home, possessions at the previous home may no longer seem important to Mom.

When the family team returns to the senior's previous home, there's a certain amount of relief. Things remaining there still need attention, but the work is now less overwhelming. First, the remaining items should be dispersed as gifts to family and friends who want them, then sold or donated. Eventually, everything will be disposed of under the firm guidance of the family team.

One final thought on the advantage of moving Mom first: Mom may feel a certain freedom from no longer having to live with all the stuff accumulated over time. So many times, after moving, a senior looks around and says, "Wow! I already have everything I need and want."

PRO TIP



Seniors are quite good at choosing what they want to move with them. Listen to their choices.

Identify, Then Deal with "Family-First Valuables"

As you look at your loved one's current situation, turn your thoughts to what you see around the house. What should be done about Mom's jewelry? What about Dad's gun collection? Has the financial and legal paperwork been moved to a safe location? And what about Grandmother's silver? Looking at Mom's possessions leads to deciding what is truly valuable—emotionally or financially.

Items that are family favorites have a value that's not measurable in terms of money. Therefore, have each family member make a list of what she or he considers important items; this should be done before a visit to Mom's current home. Family members usually have different material objects that are special to them. Combine the various perspectives into a family list.

MOVE FIRST

Now, go to the house. As you locate items on the family list, you'll also begin to identify items *not* on the list. Because everyone has a different perspective, plan for the list to grow longer and longer.

List "Who Gets What"

As you create a list of possessions, identify any valuables that go with your senior to the new place. Ask whether your loved one wants to gift these things now or enjoy them for a little while longer. Encourage your senior to make these weighty decisions on their own.

After your senior weighs in, make a list of "who gets what." Share a copy of this disbursement list with all family members. For "treat with special care" and items going to specific family members, it's helpful to place some sort of identification underneath each item—colored dots or sticky notes, for example.

All family members have equal rights to repurpose unmarked possessions left at the house after a senior move. Some members may choose not to take anything until after the senior has passed; other members may offer to take whatever the senior gives them. Identify and then deal with these "family-first valuables" as a team-building exercise; this helps everyone get ready for the move.

Remove Valuables

Before employing outside help, eliminate worry about valuables by transferring them to a different location. This initial effort to preserve family treasures is important to the family team and the senior and serves as an opportunity to share a common family goal.

EXAMPLES OF MOVE FIRST

Memory Care

This situation requires you to act as soon as possible, which means moving first. When relocating a senior in this situation, making all the decisions and leaving the senior out of the process is often necessary.

To put this into effect, one family team member plans a full-day outing. When it's time to go "home," this member brings the senior to their new "home." The family shares in the relief that this new location means access to regular meals for their senior.

HOW TO EASILY MOVE AN AGING PARENT INTO THEIR NEXT HOME

“This is my couch, isn’t it?” one woman asked upon seeing her new apartment. She settled right in, knowing that something was different, but not overly concerned with such a small detail. Such comfortable resignation highlights how quickly present-time thoughts change and disappear when a senior’s memory is impaired.

Assisted Living

A doctor’s evaluation after a stay in rehab (after falling or suffering an injury) may be the impetus for moving a senior. This circumstance presents your loved one with proof that external help (the doctor’s evaluation) is something valuable. Falling down and *not* getting hurt is a warning to be heeded—things could have been worse.

Recognize the limitations of aging; accept that living with others who check on your loved one daily gives you peace of mind. Trained staff members provide caregiving, bathing, and dressing. Communal activities and prepared meals become welcome alternatives to a senior living alone. This may very well be the best option for your senior—to leave a house and its responsibilities behind.

GET RID OF THINGS FIRST

De-clutter and Downsize

This process takes a lot of time and patience. Weekly meetings, with well-defined goals, are the cornerstone for progress in organizing a home in which your loved one continues to spend their days. Observe your senior during this process. Are the perceived benefits welcomed and appreciated? Are you seeing signs of relief?

Things the Senior Wants

Establish an “off-limits” space, such as a portion of the bedroom closet in the existing home, to store your senior’s valuables until it’s time to move.

Things Family Members Want

Family dynamics come into play when making decisions for an aging senior.

MOVE FIRST

All family members need to be given enough time to choose what items they want to keep and allowed to participate in decisions at their confidence level.

Some family members have no trouble expressing what they want from Mom's belongings. This type of family member is comfortable saying, "Yes, I want all the china."

On the opposite end of the spectrum is the family member who doesn't say anything until the loved one's situation is more settled, only then speaking up about their personal wishes. "This pudding bowl is something I always cherished. Now that Mom has let go of it, I'd like it as a memento."

Things to Be Discarded

Getting rid of the accumulations of a lifetime includes selling or donating items. These options become problematic when the family truly wants to respect the loved one's choices. Additionally, the difference between appraisal value and what someone will pay for Mom's possessions can lead to discomfort for family negotiators. The reality of what can be collected from an estate sale can cause more indecision. (The average amount collected from such a sale is usually \$500 to \$3,000.)

PRO TIP



Relocate any valuables before addressing what needs to be discarded or sold.

Examples of Problems Encountered with the "Get Rid of Things First" Option

Requests for Return of Donated Items

Early on in my business life, a client's daughter wanted me to get things back that had already been donated. She stated that she would have preferred to donate these items herself. From that time on, I have kept records of donations made during a senior move.

PRO TIP



Get receipts for donated items.

Request for Return of Sold Items

Much later in my business life, after a senior's passing, an executor tried to cancel the POA's decision to sell many items. The executor lived overseas, and the POA lived locally. I understood the dilemma shared by the family in deciding who had more authority over the items, the executor or the POA. In that instance, since a check for proceeds had already been issued, the completed sales were determined to be legally authorized by the POA.

PRO TIP



Legal documents can provide answers when family members disagree.

Employ Professional Help

When we arrived to help John with his move, his family had done the sorting ahead of time, had removed all the valuables, and had placed the donations in a pile in a separate room. With due diligence, my team went through the donation pile and recovered various items to sell. An original Van Briggles pottery piece was recovered from the pile, and its sale earned the family enough money to cover the cost of the move.

PRO TIP



Professional experience by move managers can prove to be invaluable.

MOVE FIRST

CONCLUSION

The Big Question: What is more important: taking care of a senior or taking care of the senior's possessions first?

The best answer is to take care of the senior first by moving them first. Assuring that a senior is settled in a new and comfortable setting can provide a family immeasurable peace.

Taking care of the person always comes first.



MOVE FIRST WORKSHEET

WILL YOUR SENIOR NEED:

- MEMORY CARE
- ASSISTED LIVING

FAMILY FIRST VALUABLES:

- MOM GETS PRIORITY CONSIDERATION
 - EVEN WHEN SHE SAYS, "I FORGOT. . ."
 - EVEN AFTER MISTAKENLY GIVING SOMETHING AWAY
- OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS INDICATE WHAT THEY WANT
 - BEFORE A VISIT
 - AFTER A VISIT
- MAKE A COMPREHENSIVE LIST OF WHO GETS WHAT
 - DO SEVERAL MEMBERS WANT ONE SPECIFIC ITEM (ADDRESS THIS TOGETHER)
 - MARK ITEMS FOR EVENTUAL DISBURSEMENT
- REMOVE ITEMS TO AN EXTERNAL LOCATION
 - PAPERWORK
 - VALUABLES

DECISION-MAKING

- GIVES SENIOR THE RIGHT TO DECIDE (OR NOT DECIDE) ABOUT MAJOR ITEMS
- LEAVE SMALL DECISIONS FOR THE FAMILY



GET RID OF THINGS FIRST OPTION

POSSIBLE WHEN THE CHOICE IS:

- INDEPENDENT LIVING
- PART OF A LONG-TERM PLAN

PROS

- SENIOR IS ENGAGED IN ALL DECISIONS
- DECLUTTERS THE CURRENT LIVING SPACE
- COMFORT IN HAVING SURPLUS ITEMS REMOVED

CONS

- REQUIRES EXTREME FOCUS
- REQUIRES A MAJOR TIME COMMITMENT
- PERMITS DENIAL OF IMMEDIATE CONCERNS
- NEED SOMEONE TO PLAN HOW TO STAY ON TRACK



CHAPTER 3

OVERVIEW OF A LOCAL SENIOR MOVE

Six siblings set up another conference call, this time to discuss the current trigger point crisis with Mom.

HOME: (calmly) Hey, everyone, Mom fell again, so this is the fourth time. She's in the hospital.

FL: (trying to talk without crying) All she did was go outside to get the mail.

VA: Is she okay?

CO: Have they told you what happens next?

CA: I really can't take time off work right now. Tell me what I can do.

HOME: We talked about this last month. We agreed, including Mom, that when this happened again, we would take care of moving her to the community she chose. I can call them, make sure the room is still available. Nobody needs to come right now.

VA: Let me know what they say. I know there's enough money for at least a year without selling the house. I'll print out the POA in case the community needs it. I might come anyway. I hate waiting. I need to see Mom for myself.

OVERVIEW OF A LOCAL SENIOR MOVE

TX: I have the medical power of attorney. Let me talk to the doctor. I'll translate what the doctor tells me so we can all understand. I still know the lingo, even though I'm retired.

CO: Guess it's time to start making this move happen. I wonder what we'll need in the way of supplies in case we decide to do it ourselves. We're all whizzes at packing. I mean, we've done it so many times before.

CA: I can get information on moving trucks from out here. I'll make some phone calls, throw out a few possible dates, then get back to everyone on costs.

HOME: You know, none of us have ever moved a senior. I've been doing some research, getting ready for this to happen—the move, not the fall.

VA: I'm glad you sent us copies of Before the Time Comes. Monica Young's advice about making plans in advance and collecting paperwork we'll need is certainly going to help now.

FL: No kidding. Getting Mom to choose her new apartment is done, but it took longer than I expected.

HOME: By the way, that same author has a follow-up book, How to Easily Move an Aging Parent into Their Next Home . . . Like a Pro, which is about how senior moves are different than other kinds of moves. It's a little late, but I'll send a copy to each of you. Scan through the Execute section. The tips are crazy easy; I think we should try to do Mom's move in one day. There are definitely enough of us to pull this off.

CA: I told you I couldn't come.

HOME: But you are helping by doing the truck research.

HOME: (Pause as HOME covers the phone.) Hold on a minute.

HOME: Listen, I need to talk to the doctor. Mom's coming out of surgery.

VA, CA: What!

CO: Surgery! I didn't hear anything about surgery!!!

FL: (sadly) She broke her hip.

TX: (urgently) I need to sit down, then I'll call you back.

PROCESS

OVERVIEW OF A LOCAL SENIOR MOVE

In the very best of situations, your senior has agreed to move. And your family team already has stipulations about what to do when and if something happens—trigger points, so to speak. Examine the three steps in the moving process detailed below and address setting a time limit for each step, so you'll be ready to proceed.

STEP ONE

Gather Information (As Time Permits, but No Longer than One Month)

Step one is all about research. Plan to tackle step one decisions as soon as the family team is ready. Notice I didn't say as soon as your senior agrees.

Decisions about how to accomplish a move can be made at any time. When is the best time to make decisions for your senior? Is it when a crisis occurs? Of course not. Plan for the move in advance; then, if a crisis does occur, implement the plan. Better yet, avoid crisis situations by conducting frequent evaluations and discussions about life changes affecting your senior. Agreement between family members about the amount of time to spend on step one may take some time.

As with any project, the first step is to gather information, ask the right questions, and then make decisions. What does it take to complete a small move on your own? Is this something the family team wants to tackle for your loved one? How does your loved one expect this to be managed? Do you have everything you need? And, of course, who's in charge?

Some important assumptions relating to a one-day senior move have been made at this juncture. The family team has been formed, and the senior's one-bedroom apartment has been chosen in a continuing care community (less than fifty miles away for a local move). Once everyone is in agreement that a move is the preferred solution, family members can evaluate the changing needs of their senior, then pick the right time to move. A peaceful transition becomes everyone's goal.

STEP TWO

Assign and Perform Duties (Ideally, One Week before the Move, but One Day before Can Work as Well)

Some step two decisions can be completed as soon as the team is ready to proceed. Encourage/ask each family team member to accept a role to play so things go smoothly. For example, the Team Leader can be with Mom for the day, while the Packing Team (two people) and the Truck Team (two people) are actively engaged in the moving process.

Making a senior move involves concepts and ideas for moving that most families may not have thought of. For example, have you ever done floor planning—taking the right amount and the right type of furniture into a new space? What about space planning—have you considered the concept of taking the right quantity of personal belongings into the new closets and cabinets? To use these concepts successfully, you need a team member to be responsible for each of these specific tasks.

Packing, with unpacking in mind, is another new concept for most family teams moving a senior loved one. All team members benefit when they embrace the idea that being ready to unpack is an equally important part of a successful moving day. Packing, while keeping unpacking in mind, makes it easier to set up the senior's new home.

Take the time to preplan the assignment and performance of specific duties. It provides clarity, and the move can be conducted efficiently for the benefit of the senior.

STEP THREE

Execute (Moving Day: 8:00 a.m. Start to 4:00 p.m. Finish)

It's moving day! First and most importantly, take care of Mom, emotionally and physically. Then, begin the packing, using plastic bins, collapsible crates, and wardrobe boxes with twenty-four-inch bars. Review the extensive packing tips provided in this book, concentrating specifically on your chosen room. Notice how steady efficiency takes you into a zen state as you photograph, label, then pack.

When the moving truck arrives at 9:00 a.m., the desire to make this day flow as intended may cause an imperceptible shift into high gear by the team. Use this momentum

HOW TO EASILY MOVE AN AGING PARENT INTO THEIR NEXT HOME

to keep the moving plan on track. Load the truck, with unloading in mind. Also, load the personal cars, maintaining the same steady pace. When you're ready to leave the house, between 11:00 a.m. and noon, you'll begin to sense that the eight-hour plan is on schedule.

When the Packing Team arrives at the apartment, begin the unpack; it's a great use of your time as you wait for the moving truck, which may have to navigate a slower route and speed. When the Truck Team arrives, assist with elevator and entrance door preparation. Continue the unpack, placement of furniture, and unpack cycle until the truck is empty. Review the worksheets provided and the PRO TIPS to make sure you have everything done to your satisfaction. As you progress, remove all extraneous items from the apartment to a separate hallway location.

Take a deep breath, cleanse your mind, and review what you have done. Tweak and address any fine details as they arise. If everything goes as planned, your loved one will be sleeping in their own bed, in the new apartment, this very same night.

EXAMPLE OF A LOCAL SENIOR MOVE

Going back to my company's first move for Robert and Minnie (names have been changed), I remember that my business partner and I spent two days packing boxes for a ten-mile move. Floor planning, under Minnie's always watchful eyes, required placing a blue painters' tape outline on the floor, for each furniture piece, in both the old and the new locations.

It took the movers an entire day to load, move, unload, and position furniture correctly. Unpacking some of the boxes while the movers unloaded seemed an efficient use of time. Thereafter, this method of unpacking during the move, along with the floor planning concept, became standard operating procedure. To complete the move, we unpacked and then removed all the packing supplies from the new location, discarding them in the community dumpster. This five-day move was successful for both us and the client. I, however, knew we could do better the next time.

CONCLUSION

If you would like to manage a senior move with one day for planning and one day for moving, you can absolutely do it. This book provides a do-it-yourself (DIY) move management plan, which challenges you to rethink the moving process, then adjust it to fit your particular situation and timeframe. Follow my advice for an expert DIY transition for your loved one; you won't be sorry you did.



OVERVIEW OF A LOCAL SENIOR MOVE WORKSHEET

STEP ONE – GATHER INFORMATION

(as time permits; maximum time of one month)

- REVIEW REASONS FOR MOVING A FAMILY MEMBER
- DECIDE ON THE TRUCK – USE THE PROS OR DIY
- PURCHASE SUPPLIES
- COMMUNICATION BASICS – SHARE INFORMATION; WITH WHOM?

STEP TWO – ASSIGN AND PERFORM DUTIES

(one week before the move)

- WHO IS THE TEAM LEADER: _____
- WHO ARE THE TRUCK TEAM MEMBERS: _____

- WHO IS IN CHARGE OF THE FLOORPLAN: _____

- WHO IS IN CHARGE OF THE SPACE PLAN: _____

- REVIEW PACKING WITH UNPACKING IN MIND

STEP THREE – EXECUTE (MOVING DAY) PRINT AND REVIEW

- TEAM LEADER MOVING DAY TIPS
- PACKING TIPS
 - LIVING ROOM PACKING TIPS
 - MASTER BEDROOM PACKING TIPS



- KITCHEN PACKING TIPS
- BATHROOM PACKING TIPS

- LOAD TRUCK
- UNPACKING TEAM DUTIES
 - BATHROOM UNPACK TIPS
 - KITCHEN UNPACK TIPS

- UNLOAD TRUCK (UNPACKING TEAM DUTIES CONTINUED)
 - MASTER BEDROOM UNPACK TIPS
 - LIVING ROOM UNPACK TIPS

- MAKE IT FEEL LIKE HOME
- END-OF-MOVE RESPONSIBILITIES