

When mom and dad don't want to move

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One of the most common challenges families face with aging parents is getting them to understand when they have reached the point where assisted care is needed. I hear it every day in my line of work; "Dad doesn't want to leave his **house**", or "I am concerned about mom's safety and health but she doesn't think she is ready." What does it mean when your parent who clearly needs to move says "I'm not ready yet?" In many cases they are face to face with fear. What they are silently saying is "I'm afraid to give up my privacy. I'm afraid this means I am going to die. I will have to give up my independence. I am afraid of the unknown."

Put your self in their place. They have lived happily in the home in which they probably raised you and where many wonderful memories exist. Now they are hearing that they need to move to someplace foreign, need someone to assist them in their daily needs and more than likely need to get rid of some of their possessions in order to fit into this new assisted home community.

Studies have shown that in general, seniors are interested in being active and involved. They tend to see themselves as being at least ten years younger than their true chronological age. Many of our seniors anxiety regarding their age is associated with an aversion to the health complications that will eventually place restrictions on their personal freedom. They are generally very proud and private people and are uncomfortable talking about their finances.

So how do you approach these proud and independent people who do not want to leave their home?

Point out the improved quality of life they will gain by not having to cook, clean their home, do laundry.

There will be social activities and outings. There will be more time to delve into their hobbies or start up a new hobby.

Have your parents talk to someone you or they know who has already made such a move. Visit a community and sit and talk with some of the residents. Ask how the transition went for them and how they are doing today.

Employ the assistance of their physician. Sometimes it is easier for them to hear that they need assistance from they doctor then their children.

Suggest that while they are still strong and able to take care of themselves is the time to go out and become educated to the various living options. Let's not wait for a crisis.

Ask your parent questions. Why don't they want to move? What would be important to them in their new home? Matching their needs and wants in their new home as close as possible will minimize some of the anxiety.

Stay positive! While discussing the options available with your parents, have a positive attitude, a calm presence and smile.

For additional information call Gail Johnson at **Legacy House** Assisted Living (208) 964-3089.

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