

When it's Time to Leave Home

The decision about whether your parents should move is often tricky and emotional. Each family will have its own reasons for wanting or not wanting to take such a step says the National Institute on Aging.

My siblings and I have been on this journey with our parents the past few years. One family may decide a move is right because the parents can no longer manage the home. For another family, the need for hands-on care in a long-term care facility motivates a change.

In the case of long-distance caregivers, the notion of moving can seem like a solution to the problem of not being close enough to help. For some caregivers, moving a sick or aging parent to their own home or community can be a viable alternative. Some families decide to have an adult child move back to the parent's home to become the primary caregiver.

Keep in mind that leaving a home, community, and familiar medical care can be very disruptive and difficult for the older parent, especially if they are not enthusiastic about the change. You might first want to explore what services are available in your parents' community to help them in their home—including home health care, housekeeping, personal care, and transportation services.

Older adults and their families have some options when it comes to deciding where to live, but these choices can be limited by factors such as illness, ability to perform activities of daily living (for example, eating, bathing, using the toilet, dressing, walking, and moving from bed to chair), financial resources, and personal preferences.

Making a decision that is best for your parent—and making that decision with your parent—can be difficult. Try to learn as much as you can about possible housing choices. Older adults, or those with serious illness, can choose to stay in their own home or move to a smaller one, move to an assisted-living facility, move to a long-term care facility, or move in with family member.