



Anthem Lakes
Waterview Senior Living



THIRTY TRANSITION TIPS

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU'RE EXPECTING —
A MOVE TO ASSISTED LIVING FOR A LOVED ONE

AFTER THE DECISION IS MADE BRINGS ONE SET
OF CHOICES, DURING THE MOVE ANOTHER,
AND AFTER THE MOVE YET A THIRD.

This guide provides insights and ideas that will be helpful for each stage of the transition
— an Anthem Lakes compilation of tips from experts.

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Thirty Transition Tips

Transitioning into even the finest assisted living facility is a major change - both for the new resident and generally also for other family members. By way of analogy, imagine a young person moving away from home to live in a college setting. That too is a major change. In a parallel fashion, entering assisted living provides the opportunity to establish new and important friendships and to be part of a community after what for many people are the empty nest years. Given the active events calendar offered in assisted living communities, it provides renewed engagement and not infrequently also health improvement for most newcomers.

Still, while major changes can be (and this one should be) life enhancing, they may also be stressful in three fairly discrete stages: having decided, making the move, after the move. This guide will discuss each of those separately.

Having Decided

1. Recognize the transition will be challenging at times, for both the loved one and their family members. This is normal.
2. Do not feel guilty. The decision was not easy. Frequently both the new assisted living resident and their family members conclude that moving months or even years earlier might have been better for everyone.
3. Especially do not feel badly if memory loss is a concern. It is progressive, and caregiving can exhaust family members. Knowing that full time professionals are providing care should be comforting.
4. Share important personal details with staff. Comfort foods, spiritual preferences, whether a morning person or not, their life experiences. Staff can become almost like family for the resident.
5. This is different than purely medical information, which of course is important, but better care requires knowing more than simply health and medication data.
6. Emphasize the positive. A new adventure awaits, with less housework, new friends, more activities, and very likely better meals and dining.



7. Be gentle with words. It is appropriate to acknowledge worries and concerns, but equally important to practice kindness and patience. Every family is different. Sometimes the transition is hardest on the person moving, but often it is hardest on one or more family members. Be kind to yourself and to each other.
8. Remember logic may not work. Feelings are valid, so be willing to listen. Often there may not be any major resistance to the move, instead more a need to have someone understand their emotions. A hug can be more effective than logic.
9. If memory loss is a concern, then simply redirecting the conversation to other topics may be an effective coping strategy.
10. Ask staff members about appliances. Different communities will have different guidelines, and memory care is quite different from other types of assisted living. Coffee pots, hair dryers, hair curlers, induction cooktops, and toasters are examples and some may not be permitted.

During the move

11. Go early and decorate the front door. Even very simple (preferably familiar) touches change the entire feel on arrival from being merely someplace different to that of arrival at home.
12. Take your time deciding what to take. Remember that what has the most sentimental value to an adult child may be entirely different than what their loved one values most. Do not bring rugs because they are a tripping hazard.
13. Remember that downsizing means downsizing. Less will be needed than previously — substantially less. Ask about favorite charities. Knowing that items will be donated for great causes can ease the process of letting go of surplus or rarely used possessions.
14. When memory care is a concern, trying to decide can be especially difficult. Spend time with your loved one. Talking to them can reveal which items have the most importance without having to ask. Let them share memories — even a little trinket may spark a favorite recollection.



15. Buy a plant! They have many benefits. Good choices can include a spider plant for less sunny locations, perhaps a lavender plant for the bedroom, or a Boston fern for spots with more shade. Check to be sure any other type of houseplant selected has no poisonous parts for people or pets — avoid English ivy, daffodils, hyacinths, Easter lilies, oleander, Peace lilies, Sago palm, and philodendron.
16. Label garments. Generally staff will do some or all laundry. A permanent marker is a wonderful aid to avoid potential confusion. Labelling is also helpful for other items as diverse as canes and towels.
17. Align the moving day schedule to correspond to the time of day when your loved one is typically at their best.
18. Limit the number of new items. Familiar is comforting. There is enough ‘new’ in the community.
19. Reassurance matters on moving day. It is possible the loved one may appear depressed, anxious, hostile, or withdrawn. It is a big change.
20. For assisted living, bear in mind that the sorting of items often requires more than a quick yes or no. Keep and donate are two categories, but ‘maybe’ is a fine category to consider at a later time.
21. Consider hiring a professional. Each assisted living facility can suggest moving professionals who are accustomed to working in this context.
22. Safeguard special memorabilia. Invariably there are at least a few items that are really treasured. Take these separately and consider where best to place them.
23. Stock the apartment refrigerator. This rarely applies to memory care, but most assisted living apartments have a refrigerator. Do not overstock, since meals will be provided by the community.



After the move

24. Give them time. Experts believe that it often takes a few months to adjust. Even the most welcoming and friendly community will not feel entirely like home right away, and while new friendships can develop quickly it is rarely immediate — though it may be if there are common connections such as prior military service.
25. Give yourself time. All the family members have made a change. Intellectually the transition may have been obviously desirable or even necessary, but we all both think and feel. Accepting the necessary is quicker intellectually than emotionally.
26. Talk with staff on the visiting plan. In some cases, depending on the people involved, it may be wonderful to plan to visit frequently and often from the beginning. However, in some cases what is best might be to avoid visiting for at least a few weeks. Different people adjust differently.
27. Be prepared for bad days. Once again, listen, be supportive. Also remember any complaints are rather unlikely to be about the family decision and more likely represent the temporary discomfort of a new environment. Expect to hear some complaints.
28. Stay the course. This can be challenging especially when there may be lingering feelings of guilt. It was a good decision. Caregiving for the loved one would only have become more difficult over time. Supervision is better, health care professionals are engaged, and quite often health improves in the fairly near term with better nutrition, activities, and friendships. Do not regret making a prudent choice.
29. Hold off on outings. Give them time, give yourself time. Conversely, planning to join occasionally (not all the time!) at meal time can be a good plan.
30. Set reasonable boundaries. If you've been the primary caregiver, remember to take care of yourself. To remember your friends, other family members, enjoy time alone, having some fun. Your loved one will have many new activities — and you now have time for some as well.

