



## Helping Seniors Through Life Transitions

- ♥ Understand how they want to live their lives
  - Stay at home/“Living in Place”
  - Live with friends/family members
  - Live in a retirement community (varying levels of care)
- ♥ Separate wants and needs from location
- ♥ Respect their desire to live their lives on “their own terms”
  - Express concerns if warranted
  - Talk with the senior, not at the senior/don’t dictate
- ♥ Identify whether this desire is in fact possible
  - What the senior can manage in terms of daily living/activities
  - What can be outsourced to service agencies
  - What friends/family members can help out with
- ♥ Identify whether the necessary resources are available (time/money)
  - Be realistic on how much is required and for how long
  - Identify short term and long term solutions
  - Identify whether gift certificates are good options
- ♥ Talk about alternative living arrangements before required
  - Before a crisis (fall, physical illness, cognitive impairment)
  - Before it is a surprise to all involved
  - Before a small problem becomes worse or critical (personal safety)
- ♥ Discuss various options (no one solution for all situations)
  - Talk about what others have done in similar situations
  - Talk about information you have learned
- ♥ Have an open and honest conversation
  - “I know what you are saying, but this is what I see”
  - Talk about your personal struggles with daily living activities



♥ Provide reassurance

- A discussion does not mean a decision has been made
- Being proactive is better than being reactive
- Accepting help is a position of power, not weakness

♥ Respect that the senior has the ultimate decision, unless signs suggest significant struggle/issues with personal safety

- Food is not properly stored/maintained fresh
- Medications are not taken
- Doctor's appointments are not kept
- Personal Hygiene starts to lack
- Housekeeping begins to significantly decline
- Social interaction is no longer pursued
- Cognitive impairment is significant

♥ Plan for the Future

- Begin the downsizing process (sell, donate, give away items that have been identified by the senior that are no longer required)
- Start prepping the home environment for potential sale (maintenance/upgrades)
- Work at a comfortable pace for the senior to make change

References:

"How to Say It to Seniors: Closing the Communication Gap with Our Elders" by David Solie

"How to Talk to Your Senior Parents About Really Important Things" by Theresa Foy DiGeronim