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How to Navigate a Relocation When Moving Closer to Your Older Loved One

While it's an honor to become your senior loved one's caregiver, it could also be a challenging journey with many decisions and obstacles along the way. Moving homes by yourself is hard enough, but it can quickly become overwhelming when you're moving to be closer to your loved one while trying to figure out the best living situation for both of you.

To help ease the stress and position you for a smooth process, [The Sonoma Valley Interfaith Ministerial Association](#) offers a guide for any caregivers moving closer to their loved ones.

Determining the Level of Care

The first step is to figure out what kind of care your loved one needs. If they primarily need emotional support and a little help with household chores, they may be OK to live independently while you get your place nearby. If your loved one's health is [quickly deteriorating](#) to where they can no longer live safely in their home, you will need to determine whether to move in with them, get a new home for both of you, or move them into assisted living. Look for signs that your loved

one needs extra care, such as having trouble walking, getting out of bed, remembering prescriptions, and accomplishing basic hygiene.

Deciding Whether to Live Together

If your loved one needs extensive care, you have a [few factors](#) to consider. For example, you could move in with them and become a full-time caregiver. You could help your loved one move into an assisted living facility or nursing home. Or you could live with your loved one and share caregiving duties with an in-home aide.

It comes down to your and your loved one's circumstances and the primary reasons for your move. For example, if you need to work full-time, it will be nearly impossible for you to care for your loved one full-time. Also, if your loved one needs only a bit of emotional and social support, you could [stay in touch](#) more often from a distance or get a place nearby and check in with them daily.

Sifting Through the Options

If you have the budget, you can purchase a home for both of you to live in together. If you go this route, you will need to research the housing market in your loved one's area to get an idea of home prices and features. Be sure not to consider any homes that would not allow both of you to live safely and comfortably.

You will also want to get pre-approved for a mortgage if purchasing a home. Not only does this reflect well on your [ability to pay](#)—which can come in handy if you get in a bidding war—but it can also reveal how much money you can afford to borrow. And typically, a pre-approval will help the home purchase go much more smoothly and quickly.

Another option is to rent an apartment, townhome, or condo with your loved one, allowing you to build your savings after moving to a new city. If your loved one needs extensive care, research the assisted living facilities [in your area](#) and set up a few tours at several different facilities.

Preparing for a Smooth Relocation

Once you have determined your living situation, start planning for a smooth moving process. Because seniors generally thrive on routine and habit, you will likely need to handle most of the relocation [logistics](#) yourself, including if your loved one is moving out of their home.

If possible, enlist friends or family members to help you declutter, sift through keepsakes, and pack for the move. Fortunately, many moving services [specialize](#) in senior moves that can help you get your belongings from point A to point B with minimal stress.

Also, look for ways to save a little money on your move. For example, instead of spending money on moving boxes, [use cardboard boxes](#) you already have. Or, borrow some from neighbors, friends, and family members. This can help save you a lot of money, especially when you have a lot of items you're relocating from one place to another.

Becoming your loved one's caregiver will be much less overwhelming if you take time to prepare for the process. Figure out how much care your loved one needs, and determine whether the two of you should live together or separate. Then, you can start deciding between living options and planning for the move. Above all, remember to have a little extra grace on yourself and your loved one during this time of drastic change.