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Elder Housing Options

Growing old doesn't always have to lead to placement in a nursing home. There are many housing options and services available to elders. Take into consideration your elderly relative's finances, health, and most importantly, their wishes.

Independent Living

Independent-living housing options encourage seniors to care for themselves while offering the added companionship of other elders and the security of nearby health and personal care services.

- **Staying at home:** The best choice may be the simplest
- **Retirement communities:** Retirement communities' feature homes specifically designed for healthy, independent seniors who wish to live with their peer group.
- **Congregate housing:** These are usually apartment complexes that provide each tenant with a private apartment and serve meals in-group dining rooms.
- **Subsidized housing:** Most larger communities and cities offer apartment housing for low-income elders.

Assisted-living Facilities

An assisted-living arrangement provides a combination of residential housing, 24-hour supervision, meals, housekeeping, and health and personal services. They are ideal for those elders who can't quite live independently; yet don't need the skilled care of a nursing home.

- **Residential-care facilities:** These community-based facilities rent out units to seniors who receive meals and assisted-living services such as grooming and housekeeping.
- **Board and care homes:** This is an arrangement where someone owning a private home rents out a bedroom and the tenants, usually skilled as caregivers or health-care aides, provide services and care as needed.
- **Foster care:** In these living arrangements, a social-service agency places an elder into the home of a foster-care family, which provides companionship, meals and assisted-living services.

For more information regarding **assisted living** or other elder care concerns simply call the experts at ComPsych®, The Guidance Resource Company®: **1-888-290-4327**. Confidential support is available, **at no cost to you** or your immediate family, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

You may also visit the website at: www.GuidanceResources.com. "First Time Users" will be prompted for your organizations web ID: **FEDSOURCE** to register and create your own, personal username and password.



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Alzheimer's Disease and your Options

Alzheimer's disease is one of the most difficult illnesses that many elders and their families must cope with. About 4 million people in the United States suffer from this syndrome, characterized by a progressive decrease in memory, intellectual, social and physical abilities.

What is Alzheimer's disease?

- Forgetfulness and gradual loss of memory (especially short-term memory)
- Inability to learn new information
- Confusion and disorientation (e.g., the tendency to get lost and misplace things)
- Tendency to repeat oneself
- Poor or decreased judgment
- Change in personality (e.g., rapid mood swings, increase in anxiety, depression and irritability)

Treatment and care options

Currently, there are no effective options for treating Alzheimer's disease. Depending on the elder's condition, the physician may recommend mild exercise, activities or physical therapy. People with Alzheimer's disease should not live alone but it's important to let the elder live as fully and productively as possible.

- Let the elder continue daily routines, such as an accompanied walk around the block or visits to a senior center.
- Avoid making major changes like changing his/her favorite daily rituals or relocating.
- Safety-proof the elder's home carefully. Be sure that lighting is adequate, flooring is flat, rugs are secure, operable smoke alarms and fire extinguishers are in place, and any safety hazards are corrected.
- Encourage him/her to make lists and write things down if she shows signs of forgetfulness.
- Purchase a special medical bracelet for him/her to wear in case she wanders and gets lost. The bracelet should state her illness and a contact's name, phone number and address.
- As the disease progresses, many families purchase alarm systems to prevent the elder from wandering away from home or away from dangerous areas like the stove.

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