



Helping an Elderly Person with a Move

According to several studies, moving is the most stressful event in life after losing a loved one or losing a job. All moves are stressful, but with age, this transition becomes more and more difficult, since people have less energy as they get older.

When helping an elderly person with a move, a preliminary assessment of the following considerations is a good place to begin: the possessions the person would like to keep, the neighborhood, the type of housing, available services and budget considerations.

How to plan ahead

While certain conditions may precipitate the decision-making process, ideally, it is better to think about a move while things are going well.

Planning ahead reduces stress and helps with the emotional transition. Providing support through the different stages of a move allows all those concerned to make the best use of their energy and resources, and to remain sensitive to the psychological impact on the older person.

The time spent together can also be an opportunity to tell stories, reminisce and exchange memories, while facilitating the transition to a new place of residence and a new stage of life.

We wish you pleasant reading and a good companionship journey!

Little Brothers

To do:

Make a list of basic services or organizations to contact

- Service québécois de changement d'adresse or call 514-644-4545 or 1 877 644-4545
- Telecommunications supplier (television, telephone, internet)
- Post office
- Hydro-Québec
- Insurance companies
- Accountant and notary
- Credit card companies
- Doctors, social workers or other health professionals
- Volunteers or caregivers



Good practices

- Take your time with the person to prepare for all aspects of the move;
- Stay calm and make yourself available. Respect the person's pace and their needs;
- Plan ahead, make lists (example: change of address);
- Focus on one step at a time;
- Ask for a floor plan of the new home or room to realistically evaluate what can be kept and where it will fit;
- Take photographs of objects or furniture that must be left behind;
- Prepare a bag with the necessary items for the first night, including medication;
- Find out about neighbourhood, parks, shops and local services;
- Highlight the benefits of the new place of residence: opportunities for socializing, care, services, parks, etc.;
- Visit often after the move to ease the transition and help your companion feel reassured;
- If the transition is painful or difficult, seek professional help.



Attitudes to adopt



- Keep in mind that your presence and empathy make a difference.
- As a volunteer, you are not alone! Share your observations: your coordinator is available to gather information about your companion's health and provide you with support.
- If you are a caregiver, stay in contact with your companion's network and specialized support services. Share your own needs and what you are going through during this transition.
- Introduce yourself to the staff at the new institution or place of residence. If you are a volunteer, introduce your organization. This will help communication. Be sure to respect the framework and limits of your companionship.



Things to avoid

- Rushing the person;
- Making decisions or choosing for them;
- Downplaying their emotions;
- Judging the person or the situation;
- Spacing out your visits.

Additional resources

Consultation service: 811 and 211

Online

Visavie, *Thinking of Downsizing? Here is the Ultimate Moving Guide For Seniors*, <https://visavie.com/en/downsizing-moving-guide-for-seniors>

Bonjour Résidences, *Moving to a Retirement Home*, <https://bonjourresidences.com/en/blog/moving-retirement-home/>

Protégez-vous, *Qui prévenir lors d'un changement d'adresse?*, <https://bit.ly/protegez-vous-changement-adresse> (in French only)

FADOQ Network, *Life in Residence*, <https://bit.ly/fadoq-vie-residence>
1 800 544-9058 or <https://www.fadoq.ca/reseau/> (in French only)