

there's no place like home

According to the AARP, 80 percent of American seniors desire to stay in their homes for the remainder of their lives. This process is known as "aging in place." Seniors choose to age in place for many reasons: proximity to family, familiarity, convenience, a desire to maintain independence, as well as safety and security.

With advancing age there are physical changes related to declining health and chronic diseases which may compromise a person's ability to remain living independently. There are also social changes that may negatively impact a senior's ability to live independently: isolation from family and friends, loss of peers, children living far away and a changing neighborhood.

There are two things to consider when making the decision to age in place. First, seniors and their loved ones should conduct a thorough assessment of any adaptations the home might need, to meet any physical limitations the senior may have now or as they age. To meet the growing demand for home modifications to suit the needs of seniors, there are many building contractors who specialize in remodeling for seniors. You

may want to seek out a Certified Aging in Place (CAPS) professional who has received training in the unique needs of seniors and how to modify homes so someone can live there longer. You could also consult an occupational therapist. THE MEDICAL TEAM, a home health agency that serves Northern Virginia, has qualified Occupational Therapists who provide home evaluation and modification recommendations to promote independence and achieve a safer home environment.

Second, seniors may benefit from outside help on an occasional or ongoing basis to ensure they can safely remain at home and lessen any feelings of loneliness. "Signs that additional help is needed could include missed doctor's appointments, laundry piling up or an empty fridge and pantry. Just a little extra assistance can increase day-to-day safety and prolong independence," says Bobbie Beharrie,

RN, Director of Personal Care Services for THE MEDICAL TEAM.

Services that can be offered in the home to help seniors age in place can include:

Companionship – A friendly visit just to talk, play a game or have a cup of tea.

Light household help – Assistance with laundry, housekeeping, meal preparation and other household tasks.

Convalescent care – Help after an illness or surgery.

Respite care – Help at times when your family is away and unavailable.

Escorting – Assistance with doctor's appointments, shopping or other errands.

Personal care – Assistance with medication reminders, bathing, dressing, and toileting.

These services are generally paid directly by the client, through their long-term care insurance, should they have it, or the Veteran Aid & Attendance pension benefit, if applicable.

"When choosing caregiving help, while you have the option to hire someone independently, we recommend going through an agency," says Bobbie Beharrie. Using an agency can provide more reliability and certainty that the provider is insured, has been properly screened and trained, and is legally able to work in the U.S. Finally, in the event that the caregiver is unable to provide services on their scheduled day, an agency with 24/7 availability can staff a suitable alternative, which may not be the case when hiring an individual. **GRL**

Source: www.seniorresource.com

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loved ones should conduct a thorough assessment of any adaptations the home might need, to meet any physical limitations the senior may have now or as they age.



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