



Three Steps in the Senior Living Spectrum

By Eric Shaw

When the faculties of one or both of your parents begin to decline, their housing arrangement may need shifting.

Many of us don't know any senior housing option short of a nursing home.

The good news is that, since seniors started living outside extended families in the last 50 years, housing options of every kind have developed to serve them.

This article gives you an introduction to three types of residency: Independent Living, Assisted Living, and Memory Care.

When browsing these options, the typical housing attributes--structural quality, space, beauty, location, ownership vs. rental, condo or coop--are

in play, but an equal concern must be given to onsite assistance for any [“Activities of Daily Living” \(ADL\)](#) that your parent requires help for in their new home, e.g. housekeeping, communication systems,



grooming care, nursing care, onsite medical facilities, easy-ambulation design, recreational options, etc.

Current trends being what they are, transportation amenities outside of the ambulance are now often replaced by rideshare services (Lyft, Uber, etc.).

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Consider this blog a first step in exploring this particular band of the senior living field. If more details on this range of facilities is needed, links to fuller treatments of the options are given below.

1. [Independent Living](#)

Independent Living facilities are designed for healthy, active seniors.

They offer an escape from home maintenance worries, enhanced neighborhood security, the fellowship of age-group peers, and recreation opportunities.

Seniors here usually remain fit enough to drive.

Their units come with kitchens, but central dining meal plans are available, too. Continental breakfast is usually a minimum offering.

Services of various types--laundry, housekeeping, massage, etc--are frequently proffered a la carte.

On-call clinical services are sometimes a part of the package, but these facilities aren't licensed to provide a fuller level of care.



2. Assisted Living Facilities

Assisted Living Facilities are a step forward in ADL help from Independent Living. They're typically regulated by the Department of Health and Human Services as medical assistance organizations.

They provide meals and housekeeping and fulsome assistance with ADL--including incontinence care.

Residents receive three prepared meals in a congregate dining room, and usually daily persona service of 2-3 hours in grooming, dressing, teeth-brushing, dispensing medication, housekeeping, etc.

A weekly calendar of events administered by an activities director is usually a part of community life.

Assisted Living Facilities may have a bus service that ferries residents to shopping centers, and can feature in-house taxis for individual trips.



3. Alzheimer's, Dementia Care, or Memory Care

This category includes institutions wholly committed to care for elders suffering from Alzheimer's disease, lapsed memories or dementia--or institutions with just a wing or floor for this purpose.

In addition to the services common to other full-care facilities, there are interventions for residents who might wander.

Thorough assistance for the the completion of ADL is offered--as in-depth as personal feeding, if needed.

Privacy is limited in these facilities, and doors have security alarms. The staff does room-by-room safety checks, and there's special signage to prompt tenants who might be easily confused.

Therapies for skill-retraining and maintaining or rebuilding memory are integrated, and residents are led to participate in pastimes and hobbies they loved and invested in before.