

Assisted Living for Your Aging Parent Who Lives Far Away

By Beverly Nelson



Photo via [Pixabay](#)

Are your elderly parents fiercely independent and living in another city? For years, you've tried to convince them to downsize and sell the spacious home they've lived in since you were born. And for years, they just won't listen. But they're getting older, and their health isn't what it used to be. Is Mom getting a bit forgetful? Did Dad fall down the stairs last month? It's become obvious to everyone that your parents can no longer live on their own. It just may be time to consider [assisted living](#).

What's Assisted Living?

[Assisted living](#) is definitely not the same as a nursing home. Is Dad still relatively self-reliant? While nursing homes help elderly people who require extensive nursing and medical care, assisted living can be a great choice for your parents if they are still independent but just need help with the basic tasks of daily life, such as eating, going to the bathroom, bathing, and getting dressed. Elderly people who live in an assisted living facility typically live in shared or separate rooms. They receive various services from the facility, and it's usually [more affordable](#) than in-home care.

Assisted Living Services

In an assisted living community, residents receive a variety of assistance to ensure their health and well-being. If Mom is forgetful, assisted living facilities can provide medication reminders or even administer her medication. Assisted living also provides housekeeping services, recreational opportunities, laundry service, transportation, and healthcare monitoring.

Benefits of Assisted Living

When your parents live in an assisted living community, they receive many benefits. For example, assisted living provides [24-hour security](#) for residents. Mom and Dad can keep most of their independence while having access to emergency help in case they fall or get sick. Many assisted living communities provide computerized monitoring, tracking residents' health, daily activities, and personal care habits. Often a physician makes regular visits to monitor the health of residents, allowing Mom and Dad to avoid long and stressful trips to their doctors. If your parents have dementia or Alzheimer's, some assisted living facilities have security monitors that ensure they don't wander away from the facility.

Is Mom or Dad a widow or widower? Seniors who live on their own may find themselves [battling loneliness](#). Good friends pass away, and others move to a different location. As a result, elderly people often experience feelings of sadness and isolation. But when they live in an assisted living community, they enjoy socializing with other seniors. Mom can take an arts and crafts class or go on a group shopping trip. Dad can eat in the dining room or watch movies with other residents. Each day, residents can participate in a variety of structured activities. When they enjoy an interesting social life, they experience improvement in both physical and emotional health.

Is Mom having trouble carrying the laundry up and down the stairs? Is it getting too difficult for Dad to mow the lawn and do yard work? Elderly people that live in traditional homes or apartments have to worry about [home maintenance](#) or lawn care. With assisted living, they don't have to worry about everyday chores. All their basic chores are done for them.

Financing Assisted Living

Assisted living sounds like a great option, but how are you going to pay for it? While assisted living is less expensive than a nursing home, it still doesn't come cheap. Seniors and their families are responsible for paying most of the cost. Some facilities may offer financial assistance, and health or long-term care insurance may pay for a small portion.

To determine if assisted living is [financially possible](#) for your family, you will also need to consider your senior parents' monthly income. Calculate social security benefits, income from pensions, and investments. You'll also need to consider your parents' monthly bills and expenses. Finally, calculate your parents' disposable income by subtracting overall expenses from the amount they receive monthly. This will determine if your parent is able to finance assisted living. You and your siblings may even need to contribute and combine your financial resources to help your parent afford the facility.

It's not easy when you live far away from Mom and Dad. You worry about their health and safety, and you wish you lived closer so you could keep an eye on them, take them shopping, or accompany them to the doctor. But you have your own life to live, and it's not always possible to live close to your aging parent. For this reason, it's important to consider assisted living.

While it may take your parent a while to get used to the idea of relinquishing a bit of independence, the move to this type of community will provide your parent with countless benefits. Assisted living offers your parent 24-hour security, monitored health care, prepared meals, and the opportunity for a more active social life. And you will enjoy peace of mind, knowing that your parent is receiving the best care, even when you live hundreds of miles away.

Beverly Nelson is the creator of Stand Up For Caregivers, which aims to help protect and advocate for the health and well-being of adult caregivers.