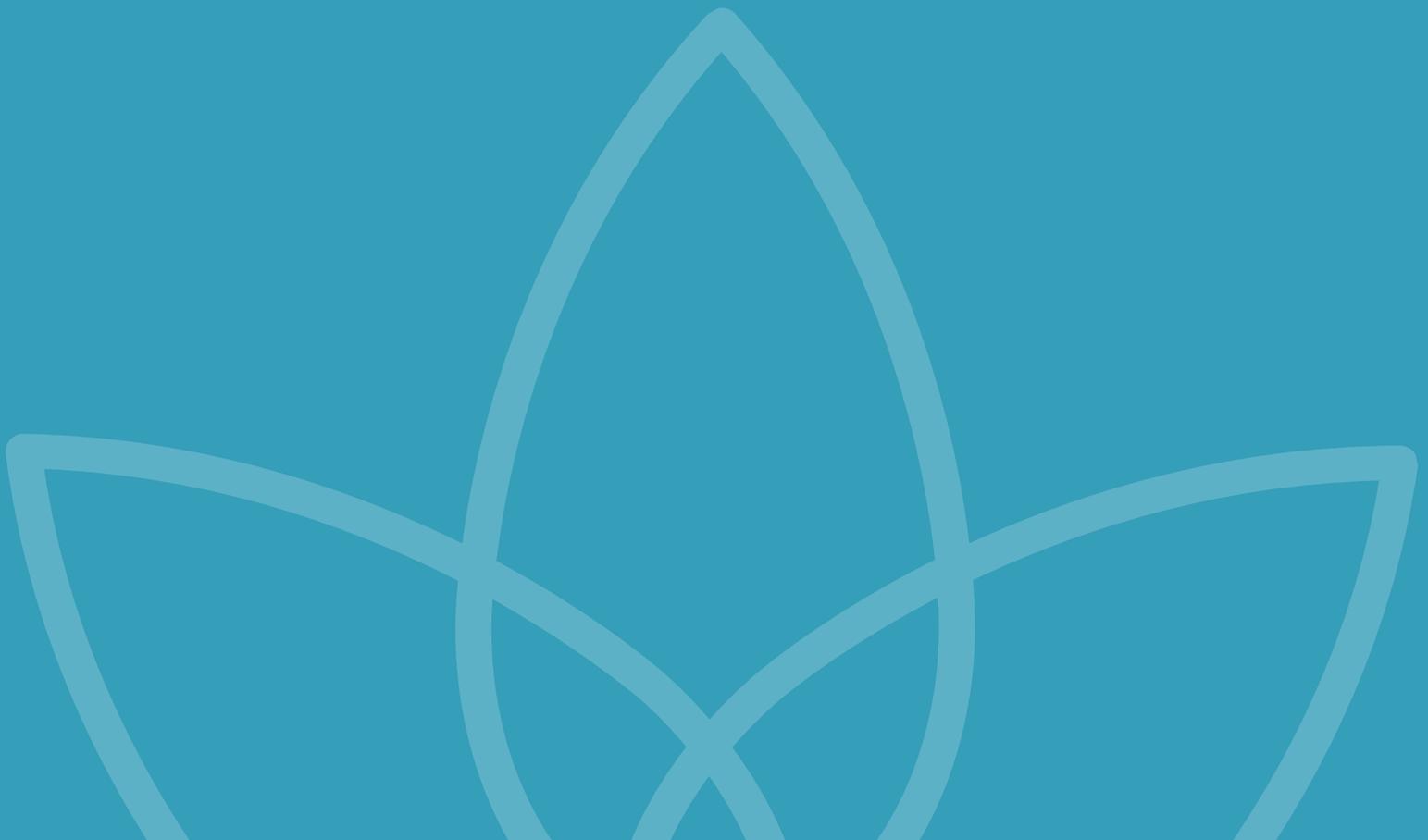




# Overcoming Misconceptions

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**7 concerns** about senior living  
to erase from your mind



Every move comes with concerns. When young adults move out of their parents' house for the first time, there are new skills to learn and fears to face. When adults move for a job, or to be closer to family, there are "what ifs" to consider, financial issues to contend with, and new environments to experience.

An aging adult's move to senior living is no different. There are options to weigh, big decisions to make, and frequently, concerns to ease.

But in all of these instances, a move also means meeting new people, exploring new places and entering the next exciting stage in life.

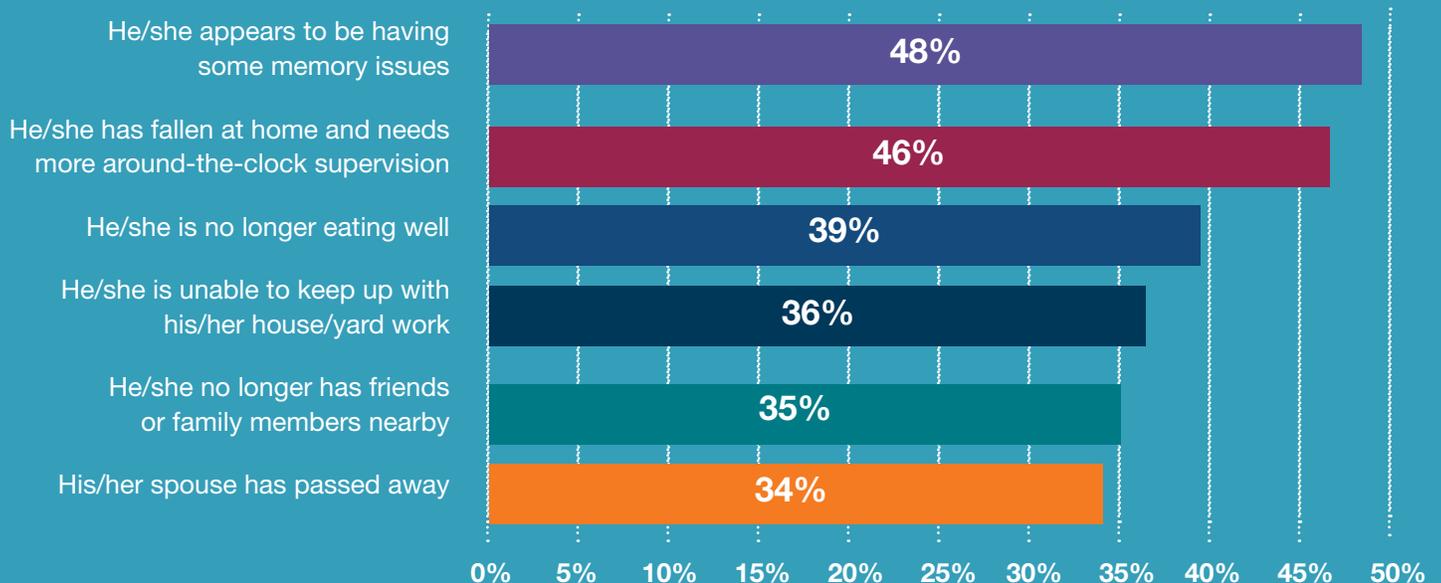
As with any move, the key to a successful transition into senior living is to identify the concerns of everyone involved – from seniors themselves to adult children to other friends and loved ones – and doing the homework necessary to address misconceptions and replace reservations with reality.

## AMERICANS' CONCERNS: WHAT THE DATA SAYS.

Nearly two-thirds of American baby boomers consider themselves likely to move an aging loved one to a senior living community, according to a recent survey commissioned by Holiday Retirement. The survey was commissioned to help the senior living provider better understand American adults' concerns about senior living, and to uncover misperceptions about senior communities.

While the majority of surveyed baby boomers said they were likely to consider retirement living for their aging loved one, they did have concerns.

**When asked what factors may influence them to move an aging parent or loved one to a senior living community, baby boomers responded that these issues would be highly or somewhat influential.**



When asked how likely they were to make these living choices for an aging parent or relative, baby boomers responded that they would be highly or somewhat likely to do the following:



### THIS E-BOOK EXPLORES

the top seven concerns expressed by baby boomers. For each concern, the e-book:



Addresses misperceptions that may exist.



Provides tips to help those considering moving a loved one to senior living.

Making the decision to move a loved one to a senior living community can be an emotional and sometimes stressful process. It is important to identify concerns and take steps to ease them in order to make the best decision for a loved one, and ensure everyone involved in the process feels comfortable, informed, and prepared.

## SENIORS HAVE MANY OPTIONS WHEN IT COMES TO RETIREMENT LIVING.



While each of these options – from independent living to assisted living to Alzheimer's and memory care – provide different levels of support, the information in this e-book pertains primarily to independent senior living. Learn more about different senior living options at [HolidayTouch.com/senior-living](https://www.holidaytouch.com/senior-living).



### THE CONCERN

My senior loved one won't have the independence to do what he or she wants.

Seven out of 10 survey respondents cited some level of concern that a senior loved one would lose his or her independence after moving into a senior living community.



### THE REALITY

Senior living actually enables seniors to live with more independence.

As the name implies, independent living communities allow seniors to live independently. Offering an all-inclusive lifestyle, these communities free seniors from the hassles of cooking and home maintenance, enabling them to focus on the activities and people they love. Seniors who can still drive have the opportunity to bring their car to the community, and those who no longer drive have access to a community's transportation resources. Living in a community environment provides security and peace of mind for a senior's health and safety needs.



### HOW TO ADDRESS

Your concerns about independence.



Learn about the retirement community's home maintenance and dining options.



Assess the senior's transportation needs, and determine if the community has adequate parking for a car or transportation resources if the senior no longer drives.



Ask about the senior living community's safety precautions.

### NEWFOUND INDEPENDENCE.

With freedom from the daily grind of cooking and home maintenance, seniors can enjoy a wide variety of activities, including:



Socializing with friends, old and new



Volunteering



Discovering a new hobby



Rediscovering an old passion



## THE CONCERN

My senior loved one will be lonely.

Among baby boomers surveyed, two-thirds had some level of concern that their loved one would be lonely after moving into senior living.



## THE REALITY

Seniors in retirement communities are surrounded by people.

In an independent senior living community, seniors live autonomously in their own apartment or other housing, but in a community setting surrounded by staff and other residents. This community environment has significant benefits, as studies have shown that living in isolation may have negative health consequences.



## HOW TO ADDRESS

Your concerns about loneliness.



Create a family “game plan” to make sure everyone has the opportunity to visit your loved one on a regular basis.



Let the retirement community associates know what types of activities your loved one enjoys, so that they can steer him or her toward programs where he or she can make new friends.



Help your senior loved one devise a plan to stay in touch with current neighbors and nearby friends after he or she moves.



Loneliness can contribute to declines in physical and mental health and even increase the risk for dementia<sup>1</sup>.

**COMMUNITY LIVING MAY DECREASE THESE RISKS.**



## THE CONCERN

My senior loved one won't get the attention he or she gets at home.

Among those surveyed, 65 percent expressed concern that a loved one living in a senior living community would not get the same level of attention he or she does at home.



## THE REALITY

Senior living community residents have daily assistance from staff and ongoing opportunities for social engagement.

Senior living communities have familiar, friendly faces serving residents daily. Many also have staff available around the clock or systems to help residents get assistance if they need it.



## HOW TO ADDRESS

Your concerns about attention.

-  Interview the community's management team; make sure you feel comfortable with all team members.
-  Stop by the senior living community at different times of day and see what residents are doing. Talk with residents who are in the common areas about how they feel about the quality and amount of attention they receive.
-  Have your senior loved one do a trial stay in the community, if available, to assess his or her – and your – level of comfort with the support and attention he or she receives.
-  Once your senior loved one becomes a resident, be sure to ask him or her about life at the senior living community and listen with an open ear to what is being said.



Senior living community residents have **daily assistance** from staff and ongoing opportunities for social engagement.



### THE CONCERN

My senior loved one would experience boredom after moving.

Nearly two-thirds (63 percent) of survey respondents expressed concern that a senior loved one would experience boredom after moving into a senior living community.



### THE REALITY

He or she will be too busy to be bored.

Senior living communities design programming to help seniors with a variety of interests get involved in daily activities. At Holiday Retirement, activities are designed around the “Seven Layers of the Holiday Lifestyle,” a series of programs that address everything from seniors’ physical activity and emotional needs to their creative, spiritual, and intellectual interests.



### HOW TO ADDRESS

Your concerns about boredom.

- ✓ Ask for a copy of the retirement community’s activity calendar.
- ✓ Visit the senior living community to observe or participate in an activity.
- ✓ Meet with current community residents to learn what they like about community living.

Activities and events help seniors stay engaged and lead richer, more satisfying lives.

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SENIORS SERVING SENIORS



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THINK TANK



CHAIR YOGA



LET’S TALK SENIORS





## THE CONCERN

I will feel guilty.

Among survey respondents, 61 percent had some level of concern that they would feel guilty about moving their loved one to a senior living community.



## THE REALITY

Feelings of apprehension will be short-lived when the senior's improved quality of life becomes apparent.

While feelings of guilt may stem from a variety of sources, it is important to remember that this move – like any move – is an emotional process. It is OK to have feelings of apprehension and stress. However, the best way to overcome these feelings is to know that the right decision has been made. Once a senior has moved into the senior living community and begins enjoying maintenance free living, making new friends, and discovering new hobbies, feelings of concern will melt away.



## HOW TO ADDRESS

Your concerns about guilt.



Talk to friends who have moved a senior loved one into a retirement community; ask them how they have addressed this feeling.



Ask the senior living community manager if he or she can put you in touch with family members of a current resident; ask them how they have addressed this feeling.



Write down all of your concerns and apprehensions; and use this list as a checklist of questions when visiting the community.

## IF THERE ARE FEELINGS OF GUILT,

try one of these five strategies to ease those feelings<sup>2</sup>:



Talk it out



Try a reality check



Give yourself credit



Exercise



Beware of guilt trips



## THE CONCERN

My senior loved one doesn't have enough money saved.

Nearly 3 out of 5 survey respondents were worried that a senior loved one does not have enough money saved to make the transition into senior living.



## THE REALITY

Senior living may actually be the more affordable choice.

Although nearly 90 percent of people over the age of 65 want to live in their current homes for the rest of their lives<sup>3</sup>, aging in place may actually be the more costly choice for many seniors. Hard costs like home maintenance can add up as a home ages along with its senior. In fact, more than one third of baby boomers surveyed in the Holiday Retirement-commissioned survey cited a loved one's inability to keep up with home maintenance as a factor that would make them at least somewhat likely to consider senior living. Intangible costs, such as the loss of personal connections as a senior loses his or her ability to drive or as social circles change, can also impact a senior's wellbeing.

For loved ones providing care to an aging senior, the costs can mount as well. Lost wages and limitations in career advancement from time spent caregiving, and caregiver burnout can take their toll.



## HOW TO ADDRESS

Your concerns about cost.



Read Holiday Retirement's e-book, "7 unexpected financial benefits of living in a senior living community," to better understand the tangible and intangible costs associated with aging at home versus in a community: [HolidayTouch.com/why-move](http://HolidayTouch.com/why-move).



Use the Retirement Cost of Living Calculator to compare the cost of living at home to the potential savings of an all-inclusive lifestyle in a senior living community: [HolidayTouch.com/retirement-101/cost-of-living](http://HolidayTouch.com/retirement-101/cost-of-living).



Schedule a meeting with a financial planner to discuss the options available and find the best possible solution.



According to 2012 data, loved ones, on average, spend **20.4 hours per week** providing care to individuals of all ages, and that number leapt to **39.3 hours per week** if the recipient also lived with them<sup>4</sup>.



Consider these costs when determining whether to make the move from home to community:

- Property taxes
- Utilities
- Housecleaning
- Lawn and garden services
- HOA fees



## THE CONCERN

My senior loved one won't eat well.

More than half (57 percent) of survey respondents expressed concern that a loved one would not eat well in a senior living setting.



## THE REALITY

Senior living may actually improve a loved one's eating habits.

Eating alone can significantly impact a senior's nutritional health. In one survey of seniors, 94 percent of those who were considered at risk for malnutrition also reported that they often dined alone<sup>5</sup>. When living alone, seniors' poor nutrition habits can stem from depression, difficulty buying groceries, or even challenges eating due to dentures or dental problems. And frankly, who wants to spend the time preparing a home-cooked meal when no one else is there to enjoy it?

Holiday Retirement communities prepare meals fresh from scratch, and each meal is carefully planned to meet the unique nutritional needs of a senior living population. Seniors enjoy their meals with other community residents, so that meals are not simply opportunities to fulfill nutritional needs, but also times for community and companionship.



## HOW TO ADDRESS

Your concerns about nutrition.

- ✓ Pay attention to your senior loved one's current nutritional behaviors and look for signs of malnutrition, such as weight loss, easy bruising, or unhealthy eating habits. These may dictate that it is time to make a move.
- ✓ Ask the community for a copy of a typical menu.
- ✓ Join the senior living community for a meal to taste the food for yourself.

## IN THE HOLIDAY RETIREMENT-COMMISSIONED SURVEY:



**Nearly 2 in 5 baby boomers cited a loved one no longer eating well as a factor that would be highly or somewhat influential** in a decision to move their loved one into a senior living community.



Moving decisions at any stage in life can be challenging; and this process is no different when it comes to senior living. When planning is thoughtfully done and concerns are compassionately assuaged, the transition can be smoother and more gratifying for everyone involved.

Holiday Retirement, a trusted name in senior living, provides security, comfort, and value to seniors and their loved ones. Seniors thrive in our affordable independent senior living communities, which offer all the amenities of your own house without the hassle and maintenance of a single-family home.



Holiday Retirement commissioned a survey of American Baby Boomers to gain an understanding of concerns, attitudes and misperceptions about senior living. The research was conducted by ORC International, a collaborative and consultative research partner to hundreds of organizations around the globe. The survey was live September 9-13, 2015, and conducted among a sample of 1,000 adults between the ages of 50 and 69. Respondents for this survey were selected from among those who have volunteered to participate in online surveys and polls.

#### SOURCES:

<sup>1</sup> [www.aplaceformom.com/blog/10-17-14-facts-about-senior-isolation/](http://www.aplaceformom.com/blog/10-17-14-facts-about-senior-isolation/)

<sup>2</sup> [www.realsimple.com/health/mind-mood/emotional-health/handle-your-guilt](http://www.realsimple.com/health/mind-mood/emotional-health/handle-your-guilt)

<sup>3</sup> [www.ijhusa.com/AginginPlaceFacts-Data.htm](http://www.ijhusa.com/AginginPlaceFacts-Data.htm)

<sup>4</sup> <https://caregiver.org/selected-caregiver-statistics>

<sup>5</sup> [www.webmd.com/healthy-aging/news/19991015/eating-alone-unhealthy-for-elderly-news](http://www.webmd.com/healthy-aging/news/19991015/eating-alone-unhealthy-for-elderly-news)

  
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