

# HOW TO START THE SENIOR LIVING SEARCH

A SIMPLE GUIDE  
TO UNDERSTANDING  
TODAY'S OPTIONS

# THE BEGINNING

## MOST OF THE TIME, IT STARTS WITH QUESTIONS

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Very few people begin their senior living search with a decision already made.

**More often, it starts quietly:**

With a conversation.

A question asked over coffee.

A moment of wondering if life could feel a little easier somehow.

Sometimes the questions are about a loved one. Sometimes they're about your own life. What seems to be getting harder lately? What kind of support is out there?

In our conversations with residents, families, and associates, one thing is clear: people want to understand their options before they feel ready to reach out. They want a clearer picture of what support can look like today, and whether it could make daily life feel a little (or a lot) smoother.

What are the options? What do they mean? What could "support" look like, and when? If these are some of the things you've been wondering about, you're right where many people begin.

This guide is meant to meet you wherever you are in this moment — to help provide some clarity, perspective, and space to think.



# UNDERSTANDING YOUR OPTIONS

## SENIOR LIVING ISN'T ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL

One of the most common surprises we hear is this: Senior Living looks very different than people expect. It isn't a single path or a single decision. It's a range of options designed to support different needs, preferences, and moments in life.

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### HERE'S A SIMPLE WAY TO THINK ABOUT THE MOST COMMON TYPES OF SENIOR LIVING:

#### INDEPENDENT LIVING

Independent Living is for people who want fewer responsibilities and more time for what they enjoy. It often means freedom from home maintenance, managing household bills, easier access to meals and amenities, and a built-in sense of community — without personal care support.

#### ASSISTED LIVING

Assisted Living is independent life made easier with personal support — on your terms. It can include help with everyday tasks when it's useful, while routines, privacy, relationships, and daily choices stay firmly in your hands.

Support often includes things like bathing, dressing, medication reminders, mobility help, or extra assistance around daily routines based on what you want and need.

#### MEMORY CARE

Memory Care provides specialized support for people living with memory loss. It combines personal support with a secure, structured environment designed to reduce stress and support familiarity.

Many families choose Memory Care when forgetfulness begins to affect safety, daily routines, or well-being, and when a loved one could benefit from more specialized understanding, structure, and reassurance.

**Each option exists to add support — not take identity away. Many people explore more than one before deciding what feels right.**

# PRACTICAL STEPS

## FIVE HELPFUL WAYS TO START, WITHOUT COMMITTING TO ANYTHING

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You don't need to do all of these at once. Most families start with one or two.

### 01 NAME WHAT'S CHANGING

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Before researching options, take a moment to notice what's feeling harder than it used to — daily tasks, safety, energy, or managing everything alone. Naming the shift helps clarify what kind of support might actually be useful.

### 02 SEPARATE "SUPPORT" FROM "LOSS OF INDEPENDENCE"

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One of the biggest misconceptions is that support means giving things up. In reality, many people explore senior living to keep their routines, interests, and relationships — with help where it makes life easier.

### 03 LEARN THE LANGUAGE

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Understanding the difference between Independent Living, Assisted Living, and Memory Care can reduce a lot of anxiety. You don't have to choose one — simply knowing what they mean helps conversations feel less overwhelming.

### 04 TALK BEFORE YOU TOUR

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Many families find it helpful to have a conversation — with each other or with a community associate — before stepping foot inside. Asking questions early can make visits feel more comfortable and more productive later.

### 05 GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION TO TAKE YOUR TIME

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Exploring options doesn't lock you into a decision. Learning now often leads to better choices later.

# IF YOU DECIDE TO VISIT

## A SIMPLE CHECKLIST TO HELP YOU GET THE MOST OUT OF A VISIT

Visiting a community doesn't mean you're making a decision. Many people tour simply to understand what daily life looks like and ask questions in person.

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### THINGS YOU MIGHT WANT TO NOTICE OR ASK:

- How do people interact with one another?
- Do residents seem engaged in daily life?
- How flexible are routines and schedules?
- What kinds of support are available, and how are they personalized?
- How does the community feel when you're there?
- What does a typical day look like here, and how much choice is built in?
- What's included day to day (meals, housekeeping, transportation, activities), and what's optional?
- How does dining work, and how flexible are meal times and options?
- What do residents do between scheduled activities? What does "normal life" look like?
- Who would you be in touch with regularly, and how does communication work?

### IF YOU'RE VISITING WITH A FAMILY MEMBER:

- Does this feel like a place where independence and personal preferences are supported?
- Can you imagine sharing time here together?
- Would this bring peace of mind — for both of you?
- If needs change over time, what does that transition look like?
- What information would you need to walk away with to help you feel more confident after today?

Navigating change and new opportunities can be daunting, we know. You're not alone.

If you'd like to talk with someone — even just to ask a few questions — we're here.

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520-797-4000**

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