

4 Ways to Help a Senior Feel Comfortable and Confident During a Big Move



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Helping a senior loved one [downsize](#) and move can be a very rewarding—but also very challenging—experience. At times, they may seem excited for the new adventure and the perks of downsizing, while other times, they seem sad and even resistant. These ups and downs, while frustrating, are perfectly natural.

Giving your aging friend or relative an [open mind](#) and an open heart is the most effective way to help them feel comfortable during the transition. Not only will your compassion help them believe they are heard and validated, but your support and guidance will enhance their confidence, making them feel less anxious and more excited. Even though most of us are sheltering in place during the COVID-19 pandemic, you can help your loved one start the downsizing process by reviewing home options, going through their possessions, and beginning to pack. And when lockdown is eventually lifted, you can help them move and adjust to their new home.

Helping a senior with downsizing

One of the first things your loved one will need to think about is where they'd like to move to and what neighborhoods are affordable. If your senior is interested in buying a new home as part of their downsize, you'll need to familiarize yourself with local real estate prices and trends. For

example, homes in the Los Angeles area have an average sale price of \$780,000 and typically spend an average of [49 days](#) on the market.

Chances are, deciding what to purge is going to be just as difficult as deciding where to move. Many objects will be beloved and cherished. You can show [compassion](#) by making sure your senior loved one knows that they can take as much time as they need to decide and that there is no rush (even if there is). Empowering them to have confidence in their decisions, though, is a bit trickier. The memories attached to sentimental items will elicit a lot of emotions. Encourage your senior friend or relative to rent a storage unit (the average price of a 10'x20' unit is around [\\$100 per month](#)). They can store items they are unsure about donating or discarding. It's a reasonable cost for peace of mind, too.

Help a senior with packing

After deciding what to keep and what to purge, you'll want to step in to help your aging loved one with packing. They may be worried that valuables will break or get lost, so carefully and thoughtfully [packing](#) each box shows a deep level of empathy for their anxiety. Be sure to keep in mind a few tips:

- Pack books spine down to protect their coverings.
- Put small, loose objects together in a bag that seals tightly.
- Use packing paper to protect fragile items and artwork.
- Write the contents and the room it goes in on the outside of the [box](#).
- Don't forget to give a few cues, like noting on the box if it's heavy, fragile or has anything sharp inside.

Help a senior on moving day

One of the best ways to show compassion on moving day is also a great way to help boost confidence. Work ahead of time with your senior loved one to plan a checklist for moving day. That way, they know most of what they can expect. Planning starts months before a move, but you can also help with organization on the big day. You can coordinate with the movers, pick up keys, take charge of last-minute errands, make sure everyone has plenty to eat and drink, and keep pets occupied and out of the way. Give your loved one space to take care of whatever tasks they want to take the lead on, and let them know you are there to handle the rest.

Help a senior settle in

Living in a [new home](#) comes with a lot of adjustments. Your senior loved one may sometimes wake up feeling confused or missing their old home, so take the time to help them settle in. Cook meals and eat together. Offer to help decorate or explore the new neighborhood together. You can help them adjust by making sure they know where the grocery store, bank, doctor's office and local parks are located, and how to get to them from their new home. If your senior loved one takes the bus instead of driving, be sure to venture on a bus ride or two with them so

they feel comfortable and confident handling their new routes on their own. You may need to make modifications around their new home for them as well to lower the risk of falling. For instance, you can add grab bars and non-slip flooring in the bathroom.

While downsizing does come with anxiety and stress, it can also be a lot of fun. The best way to build confidence and show compassion is to help your senior stay positive and upbeat about the process.

Additional resources

[Should I Downsize My Home: How to Decide](#)

[Virtual Open Houses and Tours of Homes](#)

[5 Tips for Selling Your Home During the Coronavirus Pandemic](#)

[The Essential Moving Guide for Seniors](#)

[Take These Steps to Avoid Moving Scams](#)