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### **Leaving Home**

As America's population continues to age, more and more families are confronted with the problem of elderly relatives who are no longer able to live safely at home. But helping a loved one reach the decision to move can be difficult. After all, giving up a home generally means the loss of personal freedom and independence. For this reason, many people facing this stage of life experience strong negative reactions, including:

- Anger
- Confusion
- Depression
- Disorientation
- Grief
- Idealization of the lost environment
- Illness

Regardless of the emotions attached to the move, it's important to remember that your relative's health and well-being are the most important factors. In addition, there are several other things to remember during the transition:

- Feeling a sense of loss, sadness, or anger is normal, although some individuals may feel relief at not having to maintain a home any longer.
- After the move, your loved one will probably miss familiar surroundings, known rituals, or people. Keeping in touch with old neighbors and friends, as well as making new friends, can help ease this sense of loneliness.
- Most of these negative feelings are associated with change. They are not your fault as a caregiver. You have done nothing wrong in looking out for a family member's safety.
- Learning as much as possible about the area is a great way to adjust to a new environment.
- Helping your loved one remember the old living residence-by maintaining familiar pictures or furniture-may lessen the sense of loss.
- The transition process will take time, and it requires patience from all friends and family members who are involved.

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