

# Confronting Isolation and Loneliness



Older adults are at a higher risk of becoming socially isolated or enduring chronic loneliness.\* Living alone, the loss of family or friends, or hearing loss can all contribute to a secluded lifestyle. More than just feeling “blue,” isolation can lead to health issues that reinforce the situation, turning it into a cycle.

Thankfully, moving away from isolation can begin with something as simple as a few words of hello each day, or having lunch with others. Steps like these can be life changing for older adults, helping to ease feelings of loneliness one day at a time.

Community centers, senior centers, and senior living communities are also excellent resources. By providing additional opportunities to engage with peers and discover new passions, “the blues” can become a thing of the past.

## A Helping Hand Ready When You Are

At The Watermark at Bellingham, our residents lead enriching and rewarding lives with confidence. Enjoy total peace of mind knowing that expert care is always just a moment away, allowing you to focus on the things that matter most to you.



Scan the QR code to learn more about extraordinary senior living at The Watermark at Bellingham.

# Is It Time to Consider Personal Care?



Have household chores become more challenging and tedious? Are you spending more time worrying about your health than living your life? Do you find yourself bored, craving mental and social interaction?

It's not easy to pinpoint when it's time to consider a move to personal care, so it can be useful to keep a few things in mind to help guide your decision.

- Personal care communities are intentionally designed to alleviate the burden of daily tasks.\*
- Residents enjoy a less physically strenuous lifestyle that can alleviate health concerns.
- Thoughtfully accessible social events, classes, and outings enhance quality of life.\*

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\* Howley, E. K. (2022). When to Move From Independent Living to Assisted Living. U.S. News & World Report. <https://welcomehealth.org/usn>

# Mitigating the Cost of Personal Care



Many people worry about the affordability of personal care, either for themselves or for a loved one. When considering what's best for your situation, remember these possible sources of financial support.

- Tap into life insurance policies. If you or your loved one have been paying premiums on a whole or universal life policy for a decade or longer, you may be able to access the funds in that policy.
- Determine whether you are eligible for veterans benefits. Certain service members and their loved ones may qualify for an increase in monthly benefits.
- Consider a personal care community with a flexible pricing structure.
- Ask about lower-cost residences such as those located farther from the elevator.
- Take advantage of special promotions. Many communities offer incentives such as one month rent-free or waiving certain fees.

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# Where to Begin With Downsizing



Moving to a personal care community usually means moving into a smaller space. Use these professional tips to ease the challenges of downsizing.

- Make a plan. Downsizing requires busy days for sorting and quiet days for reflection. Be sure to give yourself time for both.
- Make a list. Before touching anything, make a list of the things you absolutely want to bring to your new home.
- Start with the unsentimental items. Get into the rhythm of parting with items by saying goodbye to things like extra cheese graters and used up rolls of gift wrap.
- Hire help. There are people and companies that specialize in downsizing. Contact your new community to see if they can recommend someone to help when you need it.
- Visit your new home frequently before moving in. Look around and visualize your favorite possessions around you. Where will you put them? What will you need and not need? Keep this visualization in mind as you sort and organize.
- State each item's purpose. If it does not have a purpose, ask yourself if it sparks joy in you. If it doesn't, set it aside.
- Wait to dispose of things. Place the items you want to part with somewhere out of sight. You'll either find yourself reaching for the items that are truly missed, or realize how much you enjoy living with less clutter.
- Have fun! Downsizing is a chance to celebrate the items and memories that you treasure, while giving you the chance to say farewell to the ones that have completed their journey with you.

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# When Is It Time to Stop Driving?



Giving up driving can be difficult. Some people equate giving up their keys to giving up their independence. But when driving becomes unsafe, or when vehicle ownership and upkeep becomes too much of a hassle, it may be time to look for alternatives.

Personal care communities understand that not everyone is comfortable with driving at night, in the rain, or at all. That's why many employ a variety of options to help residents get around quickly and easily. Cars, vans, and buses run to shopping centers, medical appointments, and even go out on exciting excursions.

Handing over the keys doesn't have to mean handing over your independence. It can mean embracing a new kind of freedom that comes with the confidence of knowing you're supported the entire way.

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PERSONAL CARE SERIES

# The Importance of Eating Well



For many older adults, eating well can be a challenge. Cooking for one, trips to the grocery store, or special dietary needs can all become barriers to good, balanced nutrition, increasing health risks such as high blood pressure or diabetes.

Overcoming barriers to eating well isn't just about having the right foods – it's about enjoying mealtimes. Whether that means dining at a table with others or letting someone else handle the cooking and cleaning, it's possible to restore joy and health to every bite.

Dining for the Soul is Watermark's unique approach to the daily art of dining. Through thoughtful attention to detail, seasonal menus, and a welcoming atmosphere, every meal is elevated to feed both the body and soul.

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# Mental and Emotional Well-Being



Many older adults find themselves feeling lonely, isolated, or lacking a sense of purpose. This can strain mental and emotional health, leading to health conditions such as anxiety and depression.\*

To help address these issues, it can be useful to employ a holistic approach to wellness. This means recognizing that emotional and mental health are just as important as physical health, and that all three are interconnected.

For many older adults, a personal care community can provide an environment to thrive. Living among peers with similar interests can restore a sense of belonging. The presence of trained, reliable associates can instill a sense of security. And access to classes and events can spark curiosity, passion, and bring about a renewed sense of purpose.

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\* Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and National Association of Chronic Disease Directors. (2008). The State of Mental Health and Aging in America: Issue Brief 1. CDC. [https://www.cdc.gov/aging/pdf/mental\\_health.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/aging/pdf/mental_health.pdf)

# Professional, Compassionate Care



Most seniors don't require 24-hour care but would benefit from a little support day to day. Whether it's medication management, help running errands, or assistance getting dressed, the care should match the individual's needs, maximizing their independence.\*

Caring for older adults also requires a positive attitude, empathy, and patience. At Watermark communities, our highly trained associates ensure that each resident receives the support they need without interfering with their day. This allows residents to enjoy a confident, carefree lifestyle where they can focus on what's most important to them.

When searching for professional care, look for signs that the community's lifestyle and events align with your loved one's interests. Talk to future neighbors, join in a meal, and ask associates your questions.

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\* Smith, G. (2022). Assisted Living & Memory Care Weighing Options. Seniors Blue Book Resources for Aging Well. <https://seniorsbluebook.com/articles/assisted-living-memory-care-weighing-options>



# Focus on Independence and Fun



When you think of “personal care” you may imagine dull hallways and bingo cards, but that lifestyle is in the past.\* Today’s personal care communities are centers for socialization, learning, and fun.

Calendars are filled with the arts, scholarly presentations, and foreign language classes to benefit the mind. Dancing, yoga, or water aerobics keep the body moving. And entertainment such as plays, movie nights, and outings to a local comedy show keep residents energized and passionate about life.

This kind of active lifestyle has been shown to have tremendous benefits:

- Physical Health: reduced risk of falls and strains while improving strength, balance, and sleep
- Cognitive Health: mentally stimulating activities and “brain games” slow the onset of memory loss and cognitive decline
- Mental Health: genuine social connections and regular activity reduce feelings of isolation and depression, and increase resilience

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# Reclaim Your Time



For many seniors, the responsibilities of homeownership can become a tedious burden. Tasks such as home repairs and shoveling snow are time-consuming and labor intensive – not to mention stressful.

Rather than hiring repairmen and scheduling snow removal, most older adults would prefer to spend their days meeting with friends and pursuing their interests. A personal care community empowers residents to trade the stresses of homeownership for a relaxed lifestyle, freeing up the hours for things that truly matter.

Personal care communities typically handle chores large and small, including:

- Complete maintenance of buildings, residences, and grounds
- Meal prep, cooking, and dishes
- Housekeeping and laundry
- Paying separate utility bills, repair bills, and maintenance costs

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# Peace of Mind



A peaceful life lived with confidence can feel out of reach or even impossible to many seniors. With tedious chores, medical appointments, and home upkeep, a constant feeling of stress can quickly become the norm. But it doesn't have to be this way.

Personal care communities do more than provide a welcoming environment – they bring peace of mind. Both residents and their loved ones can rest easy knowing that a helping hand is never far away, and that an active lifestyle is always just outside the door.

Time and again, new residents tell us, “It’s not what I thought it would be,” and, “I wish I’d done this years ago.” With full social calendars, engaging classes, and a refreshing lack of chores, personal care communities let older adults enjoy a lifestyle of peace and security.

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