

Move In Week Checklist

Stability Plan for a Smooth Transition

The first weeks after move-in are critical for adjustment and stability. This step-by-step guide helps ensure a smooth transition by being present, proactive, and responsive during this vulnerable time. Your involvement during the first 7-14 days can make all the difference.

Before Move-In Day

- **Set up the room:** Bring in familiar furniture, photos, and comforting items before move-in day
- **Label everything:** Clothes, assistive devices, personal items with permanent marker or labels
- **Create a contact sheet:** Family phone numbers, doctor info, pharmacy details for staff
- **Prepare a one-page bio:** "About Me" sheet with interests, routines, preferences, and history
- **Review the care plan:** Confirm details are accurate and complete
- **Meet the care team:** Introduce yourself to the nurse, care manager, and caregivers
- **Plan the timing:** Move in morning or early afternoon, not evening or weekends if possible

Move-In Day (Day 1)

- **Arrive early:** Be there to settle your loved one in and observe the environment
- **Unpack together:** Make the room feel like home with familiar items
- **Meet neighbors:** Introduce your loved one to other residents
- **Tour the building together:** Walk to dining room, activity room, bathrooms
- **Attend first meal:** Sit with your loved one at their first meal, introduce them to tablemates
- **Review call button:** Make sure they know how to call for help
- **Observe staff interactions:** Watch how caregivers engage with your loved one
- **End on a positive note:** Leave during an activity or meal, not when they're alone

Tip: Don't stay all day. Your goal is to help them settle and begin building relationships with staff and residents. Long first-day visits can sometimes make the separation harder.

Days 2-3: Close Monitoring

- **Visit at different times:** Come during meals, activities, and evening hours to observe routines
- **Check in with staff:** Ask how the first night went, any concerns or observations
- **Monitor eating and drinking:** Is your loved one eating? Drinking enough fluids?
- **Watch for distress:** Confusion, anxiety, refusal to participate, or withdrawal
- **Encourage activity participation:** Walk them to activities, introduce them to the activities director
- **Review medications:** Confirm they're receiving meds as prescribed
- **Document concerns:** Keep notes about any issues or observations

Days 4-7: First Week

- **Continue daily visits:** Visit at varied times to see different shifts and routines
- **Meet with the care manager:** Formal check-in about adjustment and care plan

- **Address any issues immediately:** Don't wait if you see problems with care or adjustment
- **Look for positive signs:** Are they eating? Sleeping? Participating? Building relationships?
- **Watch for red flags:** Weight loss, dehydration, unexplained bruising, increased confusion
- **Support routine building:** Help them learn the schedule and navigate the community
- **Stay positive:** Acknowledge adjustment is hard but express confidence they'll settle in

Week 2: Establishing Stability

- **Reduce visit frequency gradually:** Start spacing out visits if adjustment is going well
- **Encourage independence:** Let them navigate and participate without your presence
- **Assess care quality:** Is the care plan being followed? Any concerns?
- **Monitor mood and engagement:** Are they settling in or still resisting?
- **Build family communication rhythm:** Set up regular call times or video chats
- **Connect with other families:** Talk to other residents' families about their experiences

What to Watch For: Red Flags

- Significant weight loss or refusal to eat
- Dehydration (dark urine, dry mouth, confusion)
- Unexplained bruises, injuries, or falls
- Increase in confusion or agitation
- Dirty clothing, poor hygiene, unkempt appearance
- Medication errors or missed doses
- Call button not being answered

- Staff dismissive of your concerns
- Your loved one begging to leave or showing extreme distress

Important: Some sadness and adjustment difficulty is normal. But if you see signs of neglect, safety concerns, or your loved one is declining rapidly, address it immediately with management or consider moving to a different community.

Communication Best Practices

- **Introduce yourself to all shifts:** Day, evening, and night staff should know who you are
- **Ask to be notified about:** Falls, medication changes, behavior changes, any incidents
- **Be specific with requests:** "Please ensure she wears her hearing aids" vs. "Help with hearing"
- **Document conversations:** Keep a log of who you spoke with and what was discussed
- **Follow up in writing:** Email or written notes about important requests or concerns
- **Be respectful but assertive:** Advocate for your loved one without alienating staff

Supporting Your Loved One Emotionally

- **Acknowledge their feelings:** "This is a big change, I know it's hard"
- **Focus on positives:** Point out new friends, activities they enjoyed, good meals
- **Don't negotiate leaving:** If move-in is necessary, be firm but compassionate
- **Bring comfort items:** Photos, blankets, favorite snacks (if allowed)
- **Maintain routines:** Visit at consistent times, keep familiar rituals
- **Give it time:** Most residents adjust within 4-6 weeks

Typical Adjustment Timeline:

Days 1-3: Disorientation, resistance, sadness (normal)

Week 1: Beginning to recognize faces and routines

Week 2: Participating more, less distress

Weeks 3-4: Starting to settle in, forming relationships

Weeks 4-6: Adapted to new environment, showing comfort

Note: Everyone adjusts at their own pace. Dementia can affect adjustment timeline.

When to Escalate Concerns

- **Talk to the care manager or nurse** for day-to-day care issues
- **Request a meeting with the Executive Director** for unresolved concerns
- **Contact your placement advisor** if the community isn't the right fit
- **File a complaint with the state** if you see neglect or abuse
- **Consider moving** if safety or care quality is compromised

National Care Planning Council

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Clinically Guided Concierge Placement Services (Fee Based)

We're here to support you through the transition. Call us if you need guidance.