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How to Know When it's Time for Assisted Living

Making the decision to explore assisted living for a loved one is a big step for families, and knowing when and how to take that step can be hard. "The senior doesn't always realize or accept that they need more help, and family members don't always fully recognize the need until a crisis happens, but the signs are often there, if you know what to look for," said Marylynn Billman, community relations director for Belmont Village Senior Living.

Belmont Village offers the following guidelines for recognizing that a parent or loved one may need more support:

Difficulty with the activities of daily living:

- Wearing the same clothes repeatedly without washing
- Not bathing regularly--a change in personal hygiene
- Not bothering to cook and not eating regularly
- Unable to keep up with laundry and housekeeping
- Only using a few rooms of the house

Memory Loss:

- Forgetting to pay bills on time, or just not paying them at all
- Not taking medicines, or taking them improperly; not managing prescriptions appropriately
- Experiencing a loss of judgment – taking an illogical or out-of-character approach to problem solving

Social Isolation:

- Losing touch with friends
- No longer participating in favorite activities
- Avoiding social situations
- Showing signs of depression – sleeping or crying

Fear:

- Calling more frequently – may indicate that they no longer feel safe or confident in their world
- Afraid to be alone at night
- More dependent on family members
- Feeling that their neighborhood is not as safe as it used to be

Safety:

- Mobility issues that limit activities
- Problems with balance that lead to increased risk of falls
- Difficulty with toileting
- No one nearby to help if a fall or incident occurs

Using these indicators as a guide can help families to feel confident that they are making the right decision and to be better prepared when broaching the subject with their loved one, according to Billman. “Helping loved ones to understand and accept when it’s time to make a change is the first step on the journey.”

Belmont Village Senior Living communities are designed for older adults who need some assistance with daily activities. For more information about Belmont Village, call an Atlanta-area Belmont Village community (Buckhead, 404-252-6271, Johns Creek, 770-813-9505), or visit www.belmontvillage.com.

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