

Growing Older Together in a Senior Living Community

Relationships don't last because of the good times. They last because the hard times were handled with love and care.

—Anonymous

Contrary to popular belief, older couples are quite happy and satisfied with their marriages. You'll find that their relationships typically exhibit a greater sense of calmness and these couples are more focused on maintaining mutual support. It is not surprising that people who have been married for many years want to continue to live together when they move to a senior living community.

Moving to a senior living community is a significant life change. That change often presents some additional challenges for married couples, especially if the care needs of the individual spouses are very different. Finding appropriate living arrangements for a couple with differing needs is a bit of a balancing act. It is important to take a careful look at the needs and wants of each spouse before the search begins.

It is wise to start with an objective assessment of individual needs and abilities. The assessment should include an evaluation of each spouse's ability to perform activities of daily living, such as bathing, dressing, managing medications and so on. What tasks are they able to perform for themselves, and with what activities do they need assistance? You will also want to think

about how they want to spend their time. What lifestyle activities are important to them? Meals and social events. Card clubs and exercise. Religious services and book clubs. Then, create a list of other considerations, like location, setting, size of apartment, number of bathrooms, and other environmental features.

It may not be possible to achieve everything that the individuals desire. Some compromises are likely, but you should try to meet those needs that are most important. A good rule of thumb is that the spouse who needs the highest level of care will typically dictate which senior living community will be able to best accommodate the couple.

It is actually possible to find a senior living community that can provide appropriate housing and services for senior couples who wish to live together. Some communities are well positioned to keep couples together even if the spouses have very different care needs, and even if one or both spouses require memory care. With some flexibility on your part, and a little creativity from the staff, they will create a variety of options that will allow spouses to live together and provide the right amount of care to meet each person's needs.

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For 50 years, Laureate Group, a local, family owned business has been helping older adults and their families manage the challenges of aging. Laureate Group operates eight senior communities throughout the Greater Milwaukee area. Additional resources can be found at:

www.laureategroup.com/blog • www.laureategroup.com • Laureate Cares: 262-832-7113

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Couples can choose to live in the same apartment with one-bedroom, two-bedrooms and even suites. Or, if it works better for their unique situation, they can each have their own smaller apartment in close proximity to each other. Although they would technically be living separately in this second case, the distance would amount to a quick walk down a hallway, or an elevator ride to a different floor. They would still be able to visit and share meals as

often as they want. They can participate in activities together, but also have some alone time.

Selecting the best living arrangements for an older couple may not be easy, but it is worth the effort. It is possible to find the right combination of appealing environment and sufficient support services that will enable couples to grow old together in comfort and satisfaction.

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