



PRESBYTERIAN  
SENIOR LIVING

# A Guide to Finding a Home When Selecting a Senior Living Community





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# Introduction

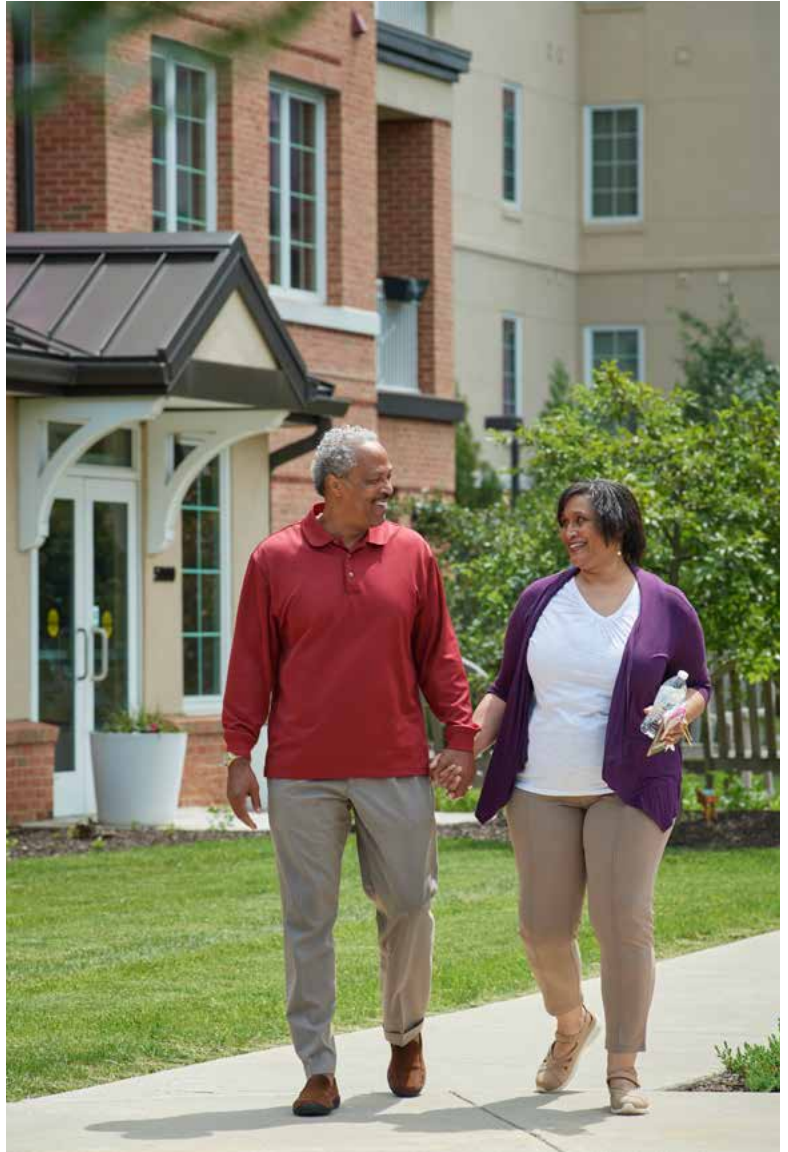
Finding a senior living community that is a good fit takes thoughtful research and planning. A primary goal should be to find a community that meets the needs of you or your loved ones now and into the future. What is also important is to find a community you feel comfortable calling home. That means looking beyond the lovely grounds and the spacious lobby to learn more about the organization, residents, and staff. And to then decide which community is the best fit.

## Inside this Guide

This guide was created for you by the team at Presbyterian Senior Living (PSL). Inside we provide an overview of the different types of senior living that are available. The information will enable older adults and their families to be better informed as they search for a senior living community.

We will also discuss why the mission of the community matters. And how a nonprofit community's resident-first approach is an important consideration to weigh in your decision making.

There's much to discover about every senior community, from the different types of care that are offered to the resident services and amenities. This guide will empower you to ask questions. Only by being informed can you make a smart decision; one you'll feel confident about as you move forward.



# Understanding the Different Levels of Senior Care



If this search is the first time you and your family have explored senior living communities, you are probably feeling overwhelmed by all of the choices. Because every organization is different and has their own unique structure, families often find it difficult to navigate the wide variety of options.

With that in mind, let's begin with a brief [overview of each level of care](#) that you'll likely encounter in your search for a senior living community. Some communities offer one or two of these types of care in one location, while life plan communities offer a whole continuum of care on the same campus.

- **Home Care:** Seniors often find this type of care to be beneficial when they want to remain in their own home but need help to make that happen. In-home caregivers can provide assistance with everything from light housekeeping and meal preparation to medication reminders.



- **Independent Living:** This is a great option for older adults looking for a maintenance-free lifestyle. These communities handle all of the worries, like lawn care and housekeeping, giving seniors more time to engage in activities they enjoy. Most independent living communities have a rich variety of programs and activities for residents to participate in. Some offer transportation and dining services, too.
- **Assisted Living/Personal Care:** Designed for seniors who want to maintain their independence while also getting a little help. Assisted living is an ideal combination of assistance and privacy. Caregivers are on-site 24/7 to help with activities of daily living, such as bathing, dressing, bathroom assistance, and more. Housekeeping, transportation, and laundry are often included. Most communities also have dining services programs from which residents choose meals.

- **Memory Support:** If a person has a diagnosis of dementia, this type of specialized care can assist the entire family. Memory support can come in the form of home care services, an adult day program, assisted living, or skilled nursing. Whatever the setting, caregivers undergo training to better understand how to support someone with dementia.
- **Transitional Care:** This is an ideal option for an older adult who has been hospitalized for a surgery, illness, or injury. Instead of being discharged from the hospital to home, the person moves to a transitional care center to continue their recovery on a short-term basis. If they meet the criteria, Medicare or insurance pay for part or all of the stay.
- **Skilled Nursing:** For those seniors who need more care than can safely be delivered in an assisted living community or those with more complex medical needs, skilled nursing can be the answer. Nurses and other caregiving team members are on-site around the clock to assist residents.

What's important to remember as you search for a senior living community is to consider you or your loved one's needs now, while also looking to the future. When you select a life plan community or a senior living community that offers several levels of care, you can feel more confident about the future. This can bring peace of mind to the entire family.



# Amenities and Programs Offered in Senior Communities

As you search for a community, keep in mind that for most older adults, it's the amenities and programs that create a vibrant, meaningful lifestyle. While care services are certainly important, people are often looking for ways to live with purpose and make the most of their retirement.

As you visit and get to know a community, it's important to ask questions so you have a good understanding of what is—and isn't—offered.

- **Transportation Services:** For many residents, this is one of the most popular conveniences. It allows residents to maintain independence without the maintenance and expense of owning a car. These services vary by community so inquire about the program when you speak with staff.



- **Dining Options:** Nutrition plays an essential role in healthy aging. Seniors who live alone often find their nutrition improves after moving to a senior living community because they have easy access to well-balanced meals every day. Make sure you ask about resident choices when it comes to meals, dining options, and times. Also inquire if a dietician and/or chef are involved in menu planning.

- **Wellness Programs:** Every community approaches wellness programming differently. At PSL communities, for example, we believe wellness is much more than physical fitness activities. Through our resident planned and driven [Thrive Wellness program](#), we strive to create a culture that nurtures each of the six dimensions of wellness: vocational, physical, social, intellectual, spiritual, and emotional. By engaging all of these, people enjoy a better quality of life.



- **Life Enrichment Activities:** There's plenty of research that shows [how important socialization is to healthy aging](#). Not only does it reduce the incidence of depression, staying social can also protect cognitive health and lower the risk for some types of chronic diseases. As you are searching for a community to call home, spend some time attending activities and events as a guest.

- **Commitment to Green:** While this might not be an obvious consideration, it is an important one. What is the organization's commitment to going green? Are they doing anything to provide a healthier, cleaner community? There's no doubt that adopting green practices helps to reduce carbon footprints and promotes community health. As do infrastructure upgrades, such as those that improve ventilation. [There's research that shows](#) older adults enjoy better mental health and greater life satisfaction when they reside in a place that demonstrates a commitment to going green.
- **Volunteerism:** Another way to find purpose during retirement years is through volunteerism. In addition to being a great way to make new friends and socialize, volunteering is good for your health. Studies show that older adults who volunteer enjoy longer, healthier lives. Stephen Proctor, who served as the Chief Executive Officer for Presbyterian Senior Living, said volunteering might even be a "[fountain of youth](#)." As you talk with the staff during community visits, ask what opportunities there are to volunteer.



## Mission-driven Senior Living

Our final tip in choosing a senior living community for yourself or a loved one is to review the organization's mission statement. Is it consistent with your personal value system? Ask staff for examples of how the organization's mission drives their decision making so you can be sure the community is living up to its promises.

Another closely related area to spend time exploring is the senior living community's tax status. Are they a for-profit company or a not-for-profit institution? While it's important for not-for-profit senior living communities to create revenue, a primary difference is what happens to revenues once they are generated.

A for-profit company is indebted to their shareholders. These are the people who invest in the institution expecting a return on their money. In a not-for-profit senior living community, by contrast, revenues are reinvested back into the organization. You'll see it in a variety of ways ranging from higher staffing to programs that promote greater social responsibility.



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## **Schedule a Visit to a PSL Community**

The best way to learn more about the services, amenities, programs, and mission of a senior living community is by visiting in person. We invite you to call the PSL community nearest you to schedule a visit today!

**View Our  
Community List**

