

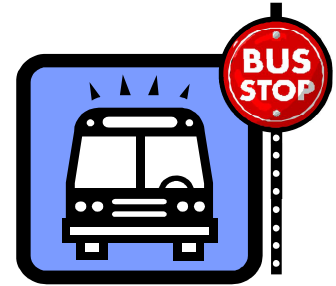
TRANSITIONING - A PART OF LIFE

Seniors Must Adjust & Adapt To Deal With Life's Changes

As we age, we may face physical, social, financial, or a variety of other types of change. How a senior deals with these challenges will help to determine their level of happiness and quality of life.

For example, the limits of arthritis may lead to depression or to finding innovative ways to maintain activity. The loss of a spouse can leave a void in one's social life, yet still create a strong desire to strengthen relationships with others. Poor hearing can limit activity, or a hearing aid can expand activities and make them more enjoyable.

Some people treat loss with finality. A part of their life is "finished." Others travel a more positive route. They transition from what is lost to what is next. Sure, during the journey they have bad days, suffer from grief and feel numb. However, the transition process eventually leads to the adjustments and adaptations that create a new beginning.



Seniors who no longer drive safely may adjust activities to fit bus schedules or arrange for caregivers to help them get around town.

COMMON TRANSITIONS

Here are some challenges that commonly force the process of transition upon seniors.

- ◆ Physical and mental changes.
 - ➔ Decrease in mobility due to illness or to a loss of vision, hearing or movement.
 - ➔ Slowing of cognitive speed or the loss of memory.
 - ➔ The loss of some decision making. (It may be surrendered or taken away.)
- ◆ Changes in living situations.
 - ➔ Living alone due to a loss of a spouse.
 - ➔ Need for help with in home activities.
 - ➔ Moving in with adult child, other family member/friend, or to a care facility.
- ◆ No longer able to drive a car.
- ◆ More dependence upon the assistance and kindness of others.

STAGES

There are various ways to map out the transition process. In the book "*Making Sense of Life's Changes*", author William Bridges focuses on the following three stages.

- ◆ **Endings** - A transition actually begins with the end (or loss) of something. However, this conclusion should not be seen as a final result. Instead, the ending is a signal that adjustment and change are required.
- ◆ **The Neutral Zone** - This is a period of feeling disconnected or numb. The past is no longer possible and the present does not feel comfortable. Even though this may seem like an unproductive time, this stage allows for reorientation.
- ◆ **The New Beginning** - The internal and external signs that point in new directions are now being understood and begin to feel comfortable. This leads to new (or adapted) activities and relationships.

(Sources: ec-online.net article by Avrene L. Brandt, Ph.D., Making Sense of Life's Changes)



Keepsake Companions

Improving Lives, One Household At A Time

www.KeepsakeCompanions.com

(800) 505-1730

Suite 11
7128 Miramar Rd.,
San Diego, CA 92121