



- Stay calm, as kids can sometimes make the situation worse. Yes, you may feel as though you are “losing” your family home, but remember, this is your parent’s life. You need to respect that.
- Understand your motives.
- Have patience.
- Try to understand the situation from your parents’ point of view.
- Support them, guide them, help them, but be tough when you need to be.

### **DENIAL IS A HUGE PART OF AGING**

Those who can be realistic and make choices for their later years are the ones who will be the happiest and feel the most in control. None of us wants to feel out of control, and many just plain don’t want to deal with any aspect of the aging process. Families can be severely impacted because of this attitude. The consequences of failing to plan ahead are not real to many seniors.

“I’ll take my chances” are words I hear on a daily basis. Perhaps nothing will happen, but it is wise to have a plan just in case. It’s funny how we plan for everything in our lives except for the last years. Get smart! Enjoy those remaining years. Have some fun. Be involved. Don’t be in denial — and that goes for the kids as well.

### **What to ask.**

When interviewing representatives of a senior living community, here are some questions to ask.

- Who owns the community?
- Is there a provision for residents who may exhaust their resources?
- Is there a charge for a second person?
- What is the expected annual percentage increase in fees?
- How old is the community?
- Do I rent, own or have lifetime occupancy rights?
- Who sells my residence? If I have equity in the property, how much do I get if I sell my property? How much does my estate receive if I die?
- Is there a religious affiliation?
- What is the average age of the residents, and is there a minimum or maximum age at entry?
- Is a physical required?
- Does the community offer or accept long-term care insurance?
- Is there a waiting list?
- How many health-care staff are on duty at all times?
- What hobby or recreational interests are offered?
- Are state and national criminal background checks done on employees?
- Are pets allowed? (This may be a question both for people who want to bring a pet, and also to those who prefer not living in a community where animals are allowed.)
- What are the policies on smoking and alcohol?
- Are resident satisfaction surveys conducted? How often? How are results analyzed and acted on?

*Donna Quinn Robbins has appeared on the NBC “Today” show to discuss senior living alternatives and the process of moving into a senior living community.*