



## What Does it Mean to Make Healthy Choices?

It may involve making changes to your diet, working to stay active or limiting blue light around bedtime. What about the choices that impact your well-being or your mental state? The things in our life that affect our well-being can be harder to identify than the things that affect our cholesterol or blood pressure, but they're arguably just as important to our overall health.



Stress can be as damaging to the body as any physical malady, and for a lot of adults, a significant source of stress and anxiety can be rooted in worrying about the safety of an older parent or loved one. When we agonize over the health and well-being of our loved ones, we may end up doing harm to our own. Think of assisted living not only as support for your loved one, but for yourself too. It provides the kind of care that allows you a full night's sleep.

The peace of mind afforded by assisted living is not limited to the person directly receiving care. For many adult children that come to us, the knowledge that their loved one is receiving constant support plays a significant role in reducing worry and daily stress. More than likely, these people are working full-time and running a household of their own; caring for an aging parent on top of that is more than any one person can reasonably be asked to do. In a living situation that fulfills their needs and an engaging curriculum of activities and events, assisted living accomplishes what no person could alone.

While it might seem intuitive that keeping a loved one home would be the healthier choice, the reality is that being a caretaker is a full-time job in itself. It may be better suited for professionals and trying to take it upon yourself can breed resentment for the person you're caring for. Caring for an older adult is a situation for which very few people have a plan, let alone the resources. It can be overwhelming, scary and downright unpleasant if you aren't prepared for the scope of the task at hand. While it may feel like you're doing the right thing for your loved one, you must be able to rationally assess the benefits and harm if you are going to make a care decision that's in their best interest.

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And if you're afraid all of this seems a little self-oriented, consider that your loved one might not feel great about being the cause of all this stress, either. Assisted living allays the feeling in your loved one that they are a burden on the family, freeing them to enjoy their time with the help they need never far from hand. Assisted living liberates you and your loved one from a situation that can be harmful for all involved: once you are no longer charged with being your loved one's caretaker, you can go back to being their family.

The healthy choice isn't always the obvious one. Caring for a loved one can be fraught with emotions: feelings of duty, guilt, filial piety and the like. However, your relationship with a loved one who requires assistance with the tasks of daily life does not have to be this way. It is possible to be warm, open, and loving with an elder relative, especially when they receive the dedicated care that can be found in an assisted living community. Choosing assisted living for your loved one is the healthy choice: by lifting the weight of caretaking off your shoulders, it frees you and your loved one to embrace the lifestyles you've been wanting for each other all along.



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