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## Caregiving Guidelines

It is best to assume that one day you will need full time care for all your personal needs. You will need someone to dress you, cook for you and help you eat, bathe you and help you with visits to the toilet (or bedpans, diapers, catheters). It's no fun to think about this, but by imagining this and outlining your personal style, you begin the plan for bringing in the right people when the time comes, and this will make all the difference in your quality of life.

Should you move to an assisted-living community or stay at your home and bring in care? Most people assume that staying home is better. With professional caregivers, it can be a wonderful experience, although it will be a lot more expensive than moving to a community. Most important is who will oversee caregiving. By definition this will not be you. If your advocate is not a good people manager – someone who can hire well and fire when necessary – you will be better off in the professional setting of an assisted-living community.

Selecting an assisted-living community or recruiting excellent caregivers for home is perhaps the single most influential task in keeping your quality of life at a positive level through your final days. Do not wait until you must rush a decision. You must not settle in your quest to find a community or caregivers who can understand and provide the lifestyle you want. I recommend that you and your advocates utilize agencies and informal referral networks as you seek recommendations for options.

### Some key factors to assess and communicate that identify your care lifestyle:

Informal (staff is a companion in regular clothes) vs. Formal (staff has a title and uniform)



Social (likes lots of visitors and company at meals) vs. Quiet (prefers just a few visitors and eats alone)



No Television\* vs. Lots of Television\*



*\* It may seem trivial, but how you like to spend your “down time” becomes very important as you become less mobile. Television viewing is a common occupation for those less active. If you prefer reading, music or quiet you need to make this very clear.*