

Tough choices: When it's time to move from home to assisted living

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While 8 in 10 Americans ages 65 and older say they want to age in their

homes, it's not always possible when health declines.

Knowing when a loved one needs a more supportive environment, such as [assisted living, continuing care retirement community or a nursing home](#), can be challenging. Though "aging in place" remains a cherished goal, seniors are fretting less about it these days, a recent Associated Press/NORC Center for Public Affairs [poll](#) found.

An expert in [geriatric mental health](#) offers some guidelines for knowing if [independent living](#) is still realistic or if someone needs more care, whether through moving or a home visitation service.

Dr. Molly Camp is an associate professor of psychiatry at University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in Dallas. In a center news release, she said there are five domains to consider:

Personal needs and hygiene: Basic self-care activities, including bathing, dressing and toileting, must be met. A person's ability to get in and out of tubs and showers and their risk of falling should be considered.

Home environment: Consider the ability to handle basic maintenance and repairs, as well as access to electricity and water, a sufficiently sanitary living environment and how to avoid safety hazards, such as structural deficiencies.

Necessary activities: Assess whether your loved one can complete complex, essential tasks such as transportation, shopping, meal preparation, cleaning and using technology.

Medical self-care: Your loved one should be able to manage their medications, care for minor wounds and self-monitor for illness.

Financial affairs: Evaluate whether the person has the ability to pay bills on time, track other finances, avoid exploitation, and enter into binding contracts when needed.

Of course, Camp noted, [family members](#) may be able to help manage finances and home visitation programs may be able to help with chores such as cleaning and cooking.

More information: The U.S. National Institute on Aging has more on [growing old at home](#).

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