

Ask Hedy! *On a regular basis, Hedy Ciocci, B.S.N., Administrator of the Selfhelp Home will answer some of the many questions we have around aging. Hedy specializes in dementia care, has extensive experience working with families and elderly patients, and is a registered nurse. She is a frequent lecturer on issues of aging.*

Recently, Hedy interviewed three residents from the Selfhelp Home on the topic of moving to a senior living environment and the impact it had on them. The residents interviewed were Hella Gerson (a 95-year-old resident of nine years), Paula Tritsch (a 95-year-old resident of eight years) and Barbara Rosen (a 70-year-old resident of three years). These three women provided some insight into the adjustment process of making a move to a new home.



Hedy Ciocci

Making the Move...A Senior's Viewpoint

Q: Moving to a new home can be a stressful event, and the deciding factors are multifaceted and unique to each individual. What were some of the factors you considered when you make the decision to move to a senior living community?

A. According to Paula Tritsch, "I was starting to fail physically in some ways and my ability to drive was limited as a result. I was also robbed and I felt vulnerable. I was still pretty independent, but I didn't want the responsibility that went along with moving into an apartment. My life is very relaxed now, I don't have any worries, and it's wonderful."

Another resident, Barbara Rosen, was familiar with the area and had been to the Selfhelp Home to attend a Sunday concert. She put her name on a mailing list for the home and she felt it was a good choice for her. She adds, "I worried that my health would create problems for me down the road, so I made the decision to make the change now, rather than wait for that to happen."

Being the first one to have a newly renovated apartment prompted Barbara Rosen to move earlier than she might have otherwise. "I wanted to move into a space where everything was new and unused. I might have waited another year, but I didn't want to miss the chance to be the first to live in one of the renovated apartments," she adds.

Q. Who helped you make the decision to move?

A. These three women all made the decision to move into a senior living community themselves. This is rather unusual, as many times, the children will notice a change in physical abilities or have concerns about their parent being alone. These concerns often prompt a move to an assisted living or retirement community that can provide assistance with some of the activities of daily living.

Q. What advice do you have for seniors who are contemplating a change such as this?

A. Paula said, "I would tell them to go ahead and do it. Your meals are taken care of and in five days, I was pretty much settled in. I have found a good doctor here who is very caring and I really had no problems adjusting to this lifestyle."

Hella Gerson had some adjustments to make and added, "I keep pretending that I am not as old as I really am! Moving to a retirement home has not really changed my life all that much. I only cook three days a week now instead of seven, and it took me some time to get used to someone else's cooking. I don't have the same freedom to eat when I want and what I want, so adjusting to being on a schedule took some time for me."

Hella also said, "I think that people should not let others influence them in making the decision. They should know if they are no longer capable of handling things themselves

and then they should make the decision. If they are pushed into a decision, they will not be happy. They need to know when it is time."

Barbara added, "I felt a little awkward for some time, but I am glad I made the decision to move. I knew about the home and because it was in my neighborhood, it was pretty easy for me. I didn't have to change doctors and I am glad that I don't have to cook for myself anymore."