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As we get older aging in place may at some point not be a viable option. If so, do you know where you (or your parent) would like to live?

It could be the proverbial trip on a rug or a slip by the mailbox that suddenly forces you to decide in what facility to recover and possibly become a permanent resident.

Beyond the financial aspect Doris Gelbman, Elder Law Attorney in Charlottesville, points to two considerations that may not be intuitive.

First, location, location, location.

Will a family member or close friend be nearby and thus able to be present to advocate for you? Facilities have great intentions to provide good care but it can be very helpful to have someone squarely in your corner.

Also, proximity makes visits more feasible. Visits can be vital in preventing loneliness, isolation, depression, and anxiety.

Second point is to see past the façade and décor. “Buildings don’t take care of people,” says Gelbman. “People do.”

And the more people, Certified Nursing Assistants, primarily, the better.

It’s hard to assess the quality of the interactions with staff in advance. Gelbman likes the idea of showing up unannounced and take a seat in the lobby, these are public settings, and just watch and listen.

Listen for the vibe of the place. Would you like to be addressed the way you hear? Some people find it off-putting to be addressed in plural: “how are we doing today”. Maybe you do, too.

Others prefer to be addressed by name rather than ‘sweetie’.

Lastly, once you have a good idea or maybe even a firm preference of where to stay make sure you share this with your nearest.

This will allow them to get you to the right place if you’re temporarily unable to speak for yourself.

Also, it likely will make them happy knowing that you have taken steps to find the type of living and care arrangements you like.

Reduced physical and mental capacities are natural parts of the aging process. Plan ahead so this very predictable development does not catch you by surprise.

Good luck.

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