

I am a baby boomer. As a result I am facing the same situation as many other Americans my age, how to deal with an aging parent. My mother is getting older and now that my father passed away she is struggling to keep up the large family home. We are concerned about her safety in the home because of the steps and the remote rural setting. After several months of talking to her she has finally agreed to look at an alternative living site.

My sisters and I looked at the independent living centers that are in the area closest to mom's farm house. There are several within a twenty mile radius of the farm. The closest is located in the small town that she has shopped in, banked at and worshiped in her entire life. She knows many of the other people that live there. We were really surprised when she announced that she would rather look at the independent living centers in the larger city that is located twenty miles from her farm. She explained that she had visited friends at the local facility and did not like the fact that there were all elderly people living there. She wanted to be in one of the independent living centers that had elderly as well as mentally and physically disabled. She felt that the activities would be more interesting with a more diverse population.

We set up appointments with two of the independent living centers in the city. We were impressed with the many services that would be available to mom as she ages. At this time she does not need help with personal cares, but the help is available if she would need it in the future. The facilities also offer a range of amenities. Mom no longer drives so it was important to her to have a facility where she could get most of her needs met without needing to rely on someone else for transportation. The independent living centers all offer many services, but the place that she decided on has a small grocery store, a bank, a beauty salon and a chapel. They also do a variety of field trips to the local mall and bigger grocery stores.

I am so glad that we let mom pick which facility she wanted to live in. This made the transition much smoother than I thought it would be. I think it is good for her to be with a more diverse population, she did not want to be surrounded by only the elderly.