

What You Need To Know About Moving into A Senior Living Community During A Pandemic

You or your loved one may need to move into a senior living community, but during the coronavirus outbreak you can't just head over to a community or two and check them out. It turns out there's a thing or two you need to know about moving into a senior community during a pandemic.

"The moving in experience is totally new." says Michelle Olafson, Director of Admissions and Resident Relations at Franke Tobey Jones.

That's the first thing to know: It's almost all virtual now. "When someone contacts us about moving to Franke Tobey Jones," say Ms. Olafson, "we can easily FaceTime with the interested person. We can answer all their questions and virtually tour any apartment or building that they would like to see. Unfortunately, we can't tour someone through our entire campus during the pandemic, have a lovely meal with them in our dining room or fill out paperwork together."

The second thing to know: The process has changed. "Interested people can view our available apartments on line, pick out their favorite apartment, download our application, send in the application with a \$750 per person deposit and either move in now, or if they are not ready, move in when the COVID restrictions are over," comments Ms. Olafson. So if you're ready to live a maintenance free lifestyle, whether you are totally independent, need assisted living or more care, now's a good time to make that decision.

Why residing at a senior living community is so comforting during a pandemic?

Despite what you've heard on the news, many, many senior living communities do not have COVID and have become a very comforting place for seniors to live during the pandemic. "We are open for business," says Ms. Olafson. "We're serving delicious meals, taking care of those that need care, hosting socially distant happy hours and exercise, and so much more! Our residents are happy and cared for!"

Residents who live in senior living communities are somewhat isolated from the community outside the senior community and in this way, remain as safe as possible from the "outside elements." Team members are also health screened every single day before they start working.

Senior living communities have all the advanced health and visitation protocols in place to protect residents and staff. This includes personal protective wear, safety practices and _____ controls. Staff is continually trained on safety and health protocols.

If you find yourself in the position of needing more care, at a senior living community such as Franke Tobey Jones that offers assisted living, skilled nursing and memory care, it's an easy transition which is coordinated by the care team.

Moreover, having your loved one in a senior living community give the family so much peace of mind, and residents feel a sense of relief not to be a burden on their family.

"Thank you from the bottom of my heart for the AMAZING job you ALL are doing, " says Franke Tobey Jones resident family member Suzy Petrich. "I am SO grateful every single day that we were able to move my Mother in Law into FTJ last October. She never wanted to move out of her home. But she is SO completely happy there. And our family has complete peace of mind knowing that she is getting the very best care on the planet. I've been impressed from day one, and every single day since then, that FTJ is the most professional, compassionate, engaging, supportive retirement community I've ever seen. Every single staff member earns an A+ every day. I just can't thank you enough."

How has the moving in process changed during the pandemic?

"There have been at least a few notable changes associated with moving into a senior living community as a function of the COVID-19 pandemic," says Ms. Olafson. "Here's what you need to know about the process during the pandemic:

- **It's almost all virtual.** Most of the transactions happen online, from browsing to renting.
- **Most communities have available apartments.** This was not always the case pre-COVID.
- **It's a more efficient experience.** It'll take less time for you and less effort since you are not doing a complete campus tour.
- **Our Personal Concierge Program.** You will work directly with one of our experienced Personal Concierge team members who will virtually hold your hand every step of the way during the process.
- **Your apartment home will be ready when you are.** There's no need to visit our campus, though you can tour the apartment that you've chosen. Your beautiful apartment will be ready for you as will your Resident Ambassador to help show you around your new building.

Are you ready to move? Selling your home during a pandemic

According to a recent poll, a majority of real estate agents nationwide described business as slower than usual but were still doing deals, and they estimated that 63% of sellers, in spite of the coronavirus pandemic, haven't cancelled their plans to move.

If you are ready to sell now...great! Although there may not be as many people out looking to buy a home at this moment, people who ARE looking for houses now are probably very serious about buying, so this might be the opportune time for you to get your home on the market.

If you are not ready to sell your home, it would be a good time to start rightsizing your home and working on the curb appeal to be ready to sell when the COVID restrictions are lifted. Since you're probably stuck at home anyway, it's a good time to go room to room and start downsizing. Consider working with a real estate agent who can help you get your home listed on line where you will receive the most views. With people literally stuck at home, shopping on line has increased dramatically, and this could work in your favor. It would be a great time to list your home so whenever the shelter in place is officially lifted, you can be one of the first on the market that day and you won't be left scrambling to get your home on the market.

Renting an apartment in a senior living community will be a virtual experience

Renting apartments virtually is becoming the new normal. Sure, there will always be people who want to visit a community before moving in, to see everything up close and personal. But for most people, the virtual experience is so easy that it may become the new norm.

"The current restrictions have forced many businesses and customers to change course quickly," says Christine Hall, Senior Director of Marketing and PR at Franke Tobey Jones. "The process of moving into a senior living community was already headed in this more virtual direction anyway; it's not really new so there's no reason to be mistrustful."

Just like banking, real estate and virtual medical visits, the senior living world is adapting quickly. And, just as we have all become accustomed to home deliveries for practically everything, contactless transactions will certainly become the norm, at least in the foreseeable future.

"Moving into a senior community will be more streamlined and much less time-consuming," says Ms. Olafson. "For those that have mobility issues, health issues or are moving in from out of county or out of state, now the prospect can oversee the entire process online and feel comfortable about choosing the exact right apartment. People may still want to physically see an apartment which is perfectly fine. During COVID restrictions, at Franke Tobey Jones they can choose their apartment on line, then visit that one apartment before they make the final decision."

What's it like moving into a senior living community during a pandemic?

It is true that no visitors are allowed into a senior living community unless providing care for a loved one. Of course, this is what is keeping most senior living communities free of COVID. "Once someone moves to Franke Tobey Jones," say Ms. Olafson, "they are provided a Resident Ambassador who will show them around campus, orient them to the specific building they moved into, answer questions, have meals with them and be their buddy for however long it takes from the new resident to feel totally comfortable."

"The Resident Ambassador program is equally good for new residents and the ambassadors," says Resident Ambassador and Tobey Jones building resident Yvonne Zubalik. "I really enjoy

getting to know new people and acquainting them with life here. For them, it helps to have a person who will make sure they know about the schedule, will accompany them to classes, etc., and get them started. Very soon they will make friends and feel at home.”

What’s the next step?

If you’re ready to move into a senior living community during the pandemic, don’t hesitate. The process will be easy, and you can start the next exciting chapter of your life right now. If you’re not ready to move, take this opportunity to rightsize to be ready to move when the restrictions are lifted.

For more information, call Michelle Olafson at Franke Tobey Jones 253-444-2873.