



ARTIST:
KATELYN MOORE

Bachelor of Kinesiology (Honours)
Class of 2023, McMaster University

With the risks that aging poses to health, elderly individuals often find themselves with a difficult choice to make: stay home or admit into a nursing home. With limited at-home resources available in today's healthcare, several choose to move to long-term care homes to avoid risk of at-home dangers such as injuries and falls. Unfortunately, this transition often proves to be mentally challenging for many retired individuals. Between social disconnection, loss of familiar environments and memories, progression of disease/injury, and altering of financial autonomy, it is reasonable that elderly individuals often feel out of control of not only their health, but also their happiness when moving out of their homes.¹

Progression of aging differs greatly between individuals – there is no way of predicting how one person may develop with age in comparison to another – thus, elderly couples often face risk of separation due to differences in care needs. Along with moving between a familiar home to an unfamiliar care home environment, symptoms such as confusion and anxiety can be aggravated with separation from loved ones, making already-isolating cognitive disorders such as dementia even more challenging to manage.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, feeling out of place was particularly easier for those making the transition from personal homes to nursing homes.² With the isolation that quarantine demanded of communities, it was even more common for elderly individuals to be placed in vulnerable and confusing situations.²

Managing the phenomenon of aging is by no means an easy feat – when caring for an aging loved one, it's hard to know what is the “right” decision when it comes to care homes and separation. Likewise, it's difficult for elderly individuals to know when it is the right time to seek extra care outside of home. As such, the message of this piece is not one to bespeak a right and wrong answer, but rather highlight the importance of us to consider the needs of the people at the centre of the wake: our parents, our grandparents, relatives, siblings, friends, for it those people where home truly is.



1. Newman M, Zainal N. The value of maintaining social connections for mental health in older people. *The Lancet Public Health*. 2020;5(1): 12-13. Available from: doi: 10.1016/s2468-2667(19)30253-1
2. Van der Roest H G, Prins M, Van der Velden C, Steinmetz S, Stolte E, Van Tilburg T G, de Vries D H. The impact of covid-19 measures on well-being of older long-term care facility residents in the Netherlands. *Journal of the American Medical Directors Association*. 2020;21(11): 1569-1570. Available from: doi: 10.1016/j.jamda.2020.09.007