

# Transition Times

A Senior Transition Publication

SUMMER 2006



## About Senior Transition



**FOUNDED:**  
May 2000

**OWNER:**  
Patricia Cusson, R.N.



### MISSION:

To provide positive lifestyle change assistance to an aging population and their families by helping them secure proper housing to meet individual needs, while managing the process of moving to their new homes.

### CONTACT INFORMATION:

P.O. Box 34  
Fiskeville, RI 02823-0034

phone: (401) 828-5020  
(800) 899-5828  
fax: (401) 828-1387  
email: sentrans@ids.net  
web: seniortransitionllc.com

## Should I Leave, or Stay?

These are key questions in the lives of seniors as they grow older, their children move away and they face a house that seems larger and far more empty than it once did. Should they move, or stay?

There are a number of pressures pulling seniors in both directions.

Senior Transition can help.

Patricia Cusson, R.N., founder and president of Senior Transition, brings both expertise and compassion to helping seniors make this difficult decision.

Many want to stay because their history, their memories, lie in those rooms, Cusson says. Yet she also knows that many leave when they realize that the history is in their hearts, more than in the walls, and that they can take both

The Summer issue of *Transition Times* focuses on the decision to move. There comes a time when seniors may find that their homes are too large or too difficult to maintain and moving is the best alternative. When do you make this decision? What do you do with all the belongings you have accumulated over decades? What can you expect in your new living situation?

Senior Transition can help you find the answers and, in this newsletter, we will share some of that advice with you.

– Patricia Cusson, R.N., Owner

the memories, and many mementos, with them.

Many want to stay in a familiar neighborhood to be near family, friends

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## Senior Transition President Speaks At Assisted Living Conference

“Downsizing for relocation,” Patricia Cusson, R.N., founder and president of Senior Transition, told members of the Rhode Island Assisted Living Association attending their annual conference held in April at the Crowne Plaza “is one of biggest problems facing seniors as they transition to their next home.”

The panel discussed the lifestyle choices available to seniors as they mature. These choices include living at their current home while receiving assistance from home care companions and CNAs. Another alternative is to move to a smaller home or apartment. This choice allows the senior adult to continue their independence and stay within their community, by scaling down their living quarters to make life a little easier. A third choice is an assisted living facility for people who are in need of minimal

assistance or care and may enjoy the social interaction in a group living setting. In many instances the senior lives independently but can cook with a microwave, go shopping and enjoy an active lifestyle. They have the comfort of knowing that they can utilize the assisted living staff when needed. A nursing home is an alternative for those seniors who require full time assistance and attention.

“Once the choice of moving to another location is decided, it is time to figure out a way to choose what moves with the senior,” said Cusson to the panel. She noted that one of the major tasks facing her company is helping seniors “to part with possessions that have great meaning, as they need to downsize. It’s difficult to move into a one or two bedroom home, when their current

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## Letting Go

You've made the big decision. You've decided to move into a nice apartment at an assisted living facility.

Now comes the decisions, and the work.

There is no way that all those belongings that you accumulated over the decades you lived in your house will fit into that new apartment. You've got to downsize. You've got to decide what to let go, and what to keep. And, once you've made those decisions, you've got to decide how you are going to get rid of the items you no longer need.

If Senior Transition is helping you with your move, this is one of the many services they can provide.

Senior Transition's trained staff can help you sort through your belongings and decide what to keep and what to let go.

Once the decisions are made, Senior Transition's staff can help you get rid of the items you no longer need.

Some may be sold on e-Bay. Some may be sold through consignment shops. Other possibilities include yard sales and free recycling services that have popped up in the last several years.

There are a number of things to consider when deciding which route to go.

eBay is very popular and very effective at selling items that may have some value but that you no longer need or want. But, not everyone is comfortable using this online selling service.

Consignment shops are particularly good at selling clothing, something that generally does not sell well on eBay or at yard sales and that cannot always be exchanged through a recycling service.

In both of these cases, you are leaving much of the work to eBay or to the staff of the consignment shop. If you decide to hold a yard sale, or to use a free recycling service, you have to do much of the work yourself, or get family and/or friends to help.

Yard sales, of course, can be great fun and they can bring in some much welcome cash.

But they are hard work, and there are a number of things to consider when deciding whether to hold a yard sale.

For starters, if you're a senior, you probably want your children and grandchildren involved. Moving items outside for the yard sale and bringing any unsold items back inside can be physically demanding.

In some communities, you need a permit to hold a yard sale. Many communities place limits on the number of signs you can put up and on how long those signs can stay up. You should find out what your community requires.

When you're packing items for a yard sale, you want to be careful that documents such as credit card receipts aren't tucked away in pockets or in the corners of boxes.

You have to think about how much to charge. You should go to the effort of putting a price tag on everything, or at least putting up signs that say something like, "All items in this box, \$1.00".

You want to maximize your sales. So, don't hold the yard sale on a holiday weekend. Display interesting items out front to attract buyers. Keep the dog inside. Be sure the yard is clean and the lawn is freshly cut.

Recycling services are relatively new. Many of them have started since the mid-1990s. And, they do not allow you to sell items. But, by allowing you to give away items you do

not need, rather than throwing them away, they enable you to help the environment.

The leading recycling service for residents in Rhode Island is [freemarketri.com](http://freemarketri.com)

This service is run by the Rhode Island Resource Recovery Corporation, the same agency that owns the state Central Landfill and operates recycling programs in communities. It is part of an effort to protect the environment by reducing the amount of reusable goods being thrown away. It is open only to residents of Rhode Island.

This service allows you to list items that you want to give away. Others may view your listing and someone may contact you to take your unwanted items.

You can list many types of items on this service. There are only a few prohibited items. They include household hazardous waste, such as paints or pesticides; safety items, such as bicycle helmets or car seats; plants; motor vehicles; and items requiring titles, such as firearms.

You will need to give an e-mail address, but not your home address. You will not have to give your phone number unless you want to. It is expected that people interested in your items will contact you via e-mail and make arrangements to get the items.

If you do not have an e-mail address, or do not want to use your own e-mail address, you can set up a free, confidential e-mail address through [free-email-address.com](http://free-email-address.com)

When you're moving, and getting rid of all those belongings, don't hesitate to ask Senior Transition for help.

Call (401) 828-5020.



## Senior Transitions President Speaks... Continued from the cover..

home has so many memories like pictures, bookcases filled with books, ornaments, and other valuable furnishings."

"Like most of us, seniors have a tendency to save everything. My company, Senior Transition helps seniors decide what to keep and what to take with them to their next home. We are sensitive to their memories," said Pat. But, as she asks her customers, "do you really still want your child's report card and school papers from 25 years ago?"

Those items not taken along with the move can be given to family members or sent to

a consignment shop. "The consignment outlet is a way to help the senior and possibly the family reduce the moving cost



Patricia Cusson, owner of Senior Transition, speaks at the RIALA conference.

while finding a good home for the items that someone else can use," states Pat.

Other members of the panel were Cynthia Conant-Arp, executive director of the Hope Alzheimer's Center, and president of the Rhode Island Association of Day Care Centers, and Bob Picard, R.N., clinical director of Roger Williams Home Care.

*Founded in 1987, the Rhode Island Assisted Living Association (RIALA) is a trade association representing assisted living facilities and industries that supply and support them.*

*RIALA's offices are located at 2224 Pawtucket Ave., East Providence, RI 02914. You can call (401) 435-8888 or visit [www.riala.org](http://www.riala.org)*

# SHOULD I STAY?

Knowing when to stay at your home or to move to an apartment, smaller home or assisted living is a difficult decision to make. There are good reasons to stay and good reasons to move forward. We have created a table to help you in this difficult decision making process. When in doubt, it is a good idea to speak with a professional such as a social worker.

<i>Situation</i>	<i>Stay</i>	<i>Move</i>	<i>Comments</i>
<b>History</b>	Family history. There are so many memories in my home.	Pictures and other mementoes can help keep those memories alive. History is in the mind and heart, not the building.	There may be more important issues, such as health, well being and socialization to consider.
<b>Family and friends</b>	They live close and it is nice when they visit.	Family and friends are suggesting a new lifestyle.	Friends and family will be welcome in your new home.
<b>Time for a change</b>	I have lived here all of my life and I am comfortable. I do not embrace change.	Friends and family have moved on.	This could be an opportunity to make new friends or catch up with old friends.
<b>Physically slowing down</b>	I can get family and friends to help or use less living space.	Staying may not be an option and may eventually become a burden to family and friends.	There are organizations that can help, but may be costly.
<b>Mental awareness</b>	I am still aware of what I am doing, but I notice that I am becoming more forgetful.	I often forget to take my medication and to perform other important tasks, such as paying bills and keeping up with appointments.	When it becomes a concern, it may be time to look for an alternative such as assisted living that offers help and independence.
<b>Living alone</b>	While I have to take care of myself, I still enjoy my confines and get around okay.	It is lonely living alone and I have to rely on friends and family to visit.	Loneliness can be overcome by being in a facility that has many people with similar lifestyles.
<b>Driving/ getting around</b>	I am still able to drive and get around with no difficulty.	I can no longer drive and must rely on friends and family to go shopping or to appointments.	Many assisted living centers offer transportation.
<b>Safety</b>	I feel safe in my home.	I no longer feel safe living at home.	Feeling unsafe is a real concern and one that should not be overlooked in the decision-making process.
<b>Current living conditions</b>	My home is in good working condition.	My home needs a lot of work. I have to climb a set of stairs to my bedroom and go downstairs to wash clothes.	The cost of repair or making changes to meet your needs should be a consideration.

## Should I Leave, or Stay? Continued from the cover..

and the neighbors they have come to know, Cusson says. However, if they move, their family and friends will still be with them and they will make new friends.

For some, this opportunity for change, this opportunity to make new friends, to learn and to grow is very compelling because their family members, friends and neighbors have moved away or died and they feel isolated.

Cusson notes that change is defined as

“to put or take in place of something”.

Life is not stagnant; it is about change. “We age and get better at some things and we lose the ability to do others,” she notes. “The milestones in aging are heralded by the slowing down of our physical abilities and the mental quickness.”

We need to accommodate these changes.

How?

We must begin by recognizing that they exist, Cusson says. Then, we must plan. We

must plan for decreased vision, hearing, balance, mental agility and muscle strength.

Cusson says the key is to be safe, to find a supportive environment.

The key is to accommodate what life has planned for us.

That is when it is time to leave and to move to new opportunities that enable us to accommodate the changes in our lives and yet still grow and enjoy life.



# Transition Tips

## Keeping Cool in the Summer Heat

Be sure to drink plenty of fluids to replace fluids lost in perspiration. Water and sports drinks are best; avoid caffeine and alcohol.

Drink before you are thirsty;  
drink on a schedule

Eat lightly, avoiding foods such as red meat and cooked potatoes.

Wear light-colored, loose-fitting clothing. It's also best to wear natural fabrics, such as cotton or linen. They breathe and are cooler than the synthetics.

Close blinds, shades and curtains, especially in the daytime, to keep the warm air and sunshine outside. Open them in the cool of the early morning or evening

Reduce physical activity,  
especially outdoors

Stay in shade or air-conditioned areas  
as much as possible.

Keep the humidity down. Don't boil foods; use cold water instead of hot when possible. Keep showers and baths short. Use an exhaust fan in the bathroom.

