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# The Benefit of Socialization for Seniors from Older Adult Communities

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**The more participation in social relationships,  
the better overall health for seniors.**

**-- “Successful Aging,” © 1998, John Rowe, M.D.,  
and Robert Kahn, Ph.D.**

## Research Supports this Perspective

- Studies continue to document the positive effect of social relationships in health in general, and in reducing mortality in particular.
- Lifestyle and attitude are significantly more important than genes in determining the vitality of one's golden years.
  - The influence of genetics shrinks proportionately as a person gets older, while social and physical habits become increasingly important to health— both mental and physical.
  - For the aging, strong social ties are even more important in preventing illnesses than genetic backgrounds.
- Significant social factors include a wide network of people, friends of all ages, conversations with friends, relatives or neighbors, participation with organizations, activity in religious groups.
- Relationships that appear to reduce the risk of mortality in the older population are socioexpressive <sup>3)</sup> relationships with friends and relatives.
- By improving access to physical activity and social engagement, much can be done to enhance later life experiences.



## Socialization Opportunities in the Home

While the traditional home-setting allows older adults to pursue relationships, management of the home can create stress. This can adversely impact the time and well being of an older adult, which can hinder their ability to socialize effectively.

### Advantages

- Ability for family and friends to visit when possible
- Participation in favorite activities and well-established routine in and around the home
- Familiarity with the location adds a feeling of security and independence

### Disadvantages

- Isolation if people are unable to visit or there is less mobility to go outside the home
- Home maintenance worries
- Uncertain assistance in a medical emergency
- Need to plan and prepare social activities, which can be time consuming, stressful and more costly

## Older Adult Living Communities – *A Better Option*

Older adult living communities are an alternative solution to the traditional home, because they embrace the importance of social stimulation. Through a community setting, older adults gain the following:

- A safe home and environment that promotes and encourages socialization
- A team of lifestyle experts dedicated to developing and coordinating a variety of stimulating group programs and physical activities designed to fit the interests of residents
- Access to clubs and events that bring together people with common interests
- Restaurant style dining, providing the opportunity to socialize with and meet new friends
- Transportation to and from pre-planned off-site activities and appointments, eliminating the need to plan social opportunities



## Research Supports this Viewpoint

Findings from the 2009 American Seniors Housing Association (ASHA) “Independent Living Report” of older adults supports the viewpoint that the services and setting of the community provides a better environment for socialization than the home.

- The majority of independent living residents who had moved recently into communities participate in three activities more frequently than while living in former residences. These activities included:
  - ✓ making new friends (68%),
  - ✓ getting together with friends (60%)
  - ✓ trying new activities (49%)
  
- 62% of respondents said they eat alone much less frequently than they would if still living in their former residences
  
- 48% of new entrance fee CCRC residents (41% for all IL communities) participated more frequently in social events since moving from their traditional home.





## Comparing the Value

Household Responsibilities	Your Monthly Costs	Community
Mortgage/Rent/Condo Assessment	Varies	\$3,288
Property Tax	\$792	Included
Food (Main Meal)	\$300	Included
Utilities	\$340	Included
Housekeeping	\$200	Included
Laundry	\$60	Included
Lawn, Garden and Pool	\$300	Included
Maintenance and Repairs	\$200	Included
Security and Fire Protection	\$55	Included
Health Club	\$100	Included
Entertainment & Activities	\$500	Included
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,847</b>	<b>\$3,288</b>

