

# Age Wise

THE FAMILY CAREGIVER'S GUIDE TO  
WHAT TO EXPECT AS YOUR PARENTS AGE



From Silver Solutions

By Dan Lagani & Laura Olivares



SILVER SOLUTIONS®



**SILVER SOLUTIONS®**  
*Compassion for Life*

### **About Silver Solutions**

Silver Solutions is a national senior home services company helping families navigate senior home transitions nationwide—including safe living and home senior-proofing, downsizing and senior move management, and home emptying and sale preparation.

At its core, this work is about people. We make homes safer, make moves to assisted living easier, and ensure that the items that matter most—family treasures, memories, and legacies—are handled with care and intention.

Each year, we support thousands of families through some of the most complex and emotional moments that come with aging—bringing clarity, structure, and compassion to situations that can otherwise feel overwhelming.

## Founder's Note

At Silver Solutions, we've had the privilege of assisting thousands of families as they navigate the complexities of helping an aging parent or loved one. Along the way, we've seen how easily an already difficult process can become even harder.

While every family's story is unique, many of the challenges that come with aging are universal. This guide draws on that real-world experience, along with insights from hundreds of expert conversations through the Age Wise podcast—offering practical guidance for the decisions and realities families face.

Our hope is simple: that your path is smoother, with fewer surprises and less stress.



With compassion,  
**Dan Lagani & Laura Olivares**  
Founders, Silver Solutions

## AGE WISE: The Family Caregiver's Guide to What to Expect as Your Parents Age – and How to Handle the Big Surprises Along the Way

### Introduction to this Guide

The later stages of life don't always unfold as we hope, do they? As our parents and other loved ones grow older, we envision them enjoying long, happy, and independent lives. But life often has other plans—usually when we're least prepared. A midnight call about a bad fall, a sudden diagnosis, or the gut-wrenching moment you realize Mom or Dad is declining faster than you thought. Suddenly, you're thrust into a role you didn't ask for: caregiver. And it's terrifying.

If you're here, chances are you're already in the thick of it. And let's be honest—this isn't something anyone signs up for. It's exhausting, confusing, and can tear you apart. Most family caregivers are between 40 and 70 years old, stretched thin, balancing jobs, kids, and their own health. Now, they're diving headfirst into caregiving—a role that demands more time and money than you ever thought you had to give, and that often lasts for years.

At Silver Solutions, we've been there. We've felt the fear, the heartbreak, frustration, and the exhaustion, and we've helped thousands of families go through it too. That's why we put together this guide—to help you face those dreaded midnight calls head-on and navigate the chaos of caring for an aging loved one with the confidence and experience of a seasoned pro.

### Why Is This Important?

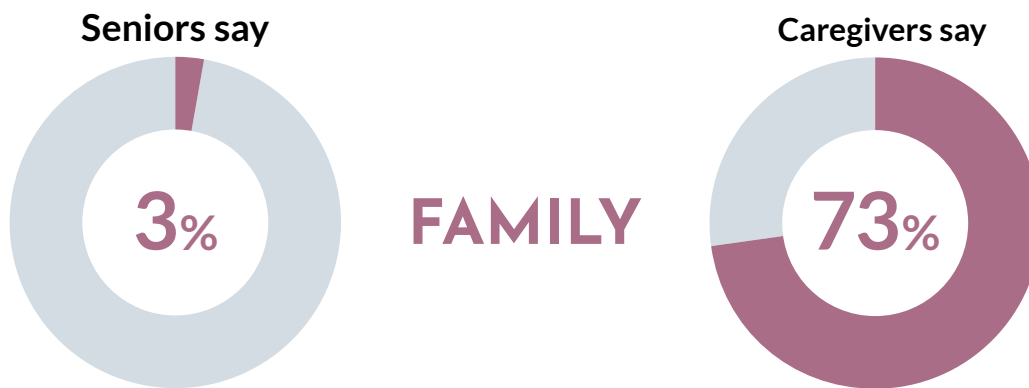
Nearly a third of Americans are over 65 or caring for someone who is. Many of us will find ourselves in this situation, often without a plan. Half of all caregivers are thrown into the role due to an emergency, and not only does it hit hard, but it can last for years! Family caregivers come in many forms, but it's often an adult daughter, juggling her own life while stepping in to care for an elderly parent or relative. And it's not easy: According to the Silver Solutions Family Caregiver National Survey, 60% work full time, 60% have their own health issues, and 24% barely find time for themselves.

To make matters worse, there is often a big disconnect between what our aging loved ones think they need and what they actually require, forcing caregivers into inevitable confrontations and conflict. Just look at how differently parents and their family caregivers answered this basic question about “who is making the decisions.”

## WHO IS IN CHARGE

### THE FINAL DECISION-MAKER

on “Parent’s Lifestyle or Home Environment”



Source: Silver Solutions Family Caregivers Survey

In this guide, we aim to give you the best advice we have collected in the years we have been helping caregivers through tough situations.

### The Top Five Issues You’ll Face as a Caregiver

- 1. The impact of an at-home fall:** There is no more common trigger event that results in more changes, more quickly, than a slip or fall.
- 2. Finding a new home for a loved one:** An emotionally charged debate over aging in place, downsizing, or moving to assisted living.
- 3. Coping with Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, or a protracted decline:** Navigating the medical system, insurance plans, and a deeply confusing litany of legal issues.
- 4. The loss of a loved one and the overwhelm of sorting through belongings:** Decluttering, sorting, and ensuring that the family treasures live on.

**5. Navigating family disagreements and long-dormant sibling issues:** Explosive conflicts and buried grievances when tough care, medical, and financial decisions arise.

Beyond the functional issues above, we'll also share the equally important emotional stories that often guide how and why we do what we do as a family caregiver:

- **Mom is stubborn and refuses help:** Barry lives across the country from his 86-year-old mom, Leona, who clings to her home despite frequent falls on the treacherous stairs. Barry has been trying for years to get her to move to a safer environment, but every time he brings it up, she breaks down in tears.
- **It's more than clutter:** Stacy lives just 3 miles from her 80-year-old father, Gene—who is still very active and strong enough to live independently. However, Stacy has concerns about Gene's hoarding tendencies. What was once a few extra piles has become unsafe and unsanitary, making it hard for her dad to even sleep in his own bed.
- **Life in the friction zone:** Lisa's 81-year-old mother, Janet, is battling dementia and is now noticeably in decline. Janet gave Lisa Power of Attorney to make healthcare decisions, but her 88-year-old husband, and Lisa's stepfather, Stan, doesn't believe she needs outside help and is battling with her at every stage.

## How-to's that you'll learn in this guide:

- Respond to sudden falls and emergencies
- Tackle clutter, hoarding, and other challenging behaviors
- Compassionately empty a family home while preserving the 'treasures'
- Understand and manage elder care medical and legal basics
- Discuss a move to assisted living or making a family home safe
- Cope with and develop a plan for progressive neurological diseases
- Select the right home caregiver and manage inevitable challenges along the way
- Take care of yourself mentally and physically while caring for someone else

If you're dealing with a crisis now—falls, hoarding, or legal issues—this guide has you covered with immediate advice and expert insights. You don't have to take this road alone. We're right here with you, every step of the way.

## Final Thoughts

Caring for an aging parent or loved one can be one of the most profound and rewarding journeys you can undertake. This guide was created to be a compass, guiding you through the complexities of caregiving—from the daily tasks to the more challenging decisions and the deeply emotional moments that come from your dual role as a family member.

Our hope is that this guide not only equips you with the practical tools to tackle each issue but also provides a sense of comfort and solidarity, knowing you're not alone in this act of love and strength. There will be difficult days, but there will also be moments of connection, laughter, and peace that make it all worthwhile.

Thank you for the love and dedication you bring to this journey.

### Downsizing Done Right

#### *A Family Guide to Drama-Free Senior Moves*

Few transitions carry as much emotion—or potential for conflict—as helping a parent downsize. For older adults, every room holds memories; every decision to let go feels personal. For caregivers, it can feel like managing logistics while walking an emotional tightrope.

Yet when handled with empathy and thoughtful planning, downsizing can be one of the smartest and most affirming steps you can take. It honors the past, restores safety and simplicity, and helps your loved one begin their next chapter with comfort and confidence.

#### When It's Time to Downsize

For many families, the decision begins with a simple realization: the house that once bustled with children, pets, and laughter now feels far too big—and far too demanding. The chores multiply, the upkeep feels endless, and unused rooms fill with “someday” items that rarely see daylight.

**Beyond space and maintenance, downsizing is often prompted by the physical changes that naturally accompany aging:**

- Loss of flexibility or balance makes climbing stairs or showering harder.
- Reduced mobility or vision makes navigating cluttered rooms risky.
- Fatigue and slower reflexes increase the chance of falls or household accidents.

Even if your loved one is managing independently today, these changes progress gradually. Planning ahead—before there's a crisis—gives everyone time to make thoughtful, emotionally grounded decisions. As **Silver Solutions** Co-Founder and senior-move expert Laura Olivares notes: ***“The best moves happen when they're proactive, not reactive. Waiting for a fall or an emergency makes everything harder—physically and emotionally.”***

Downsizing, then, isn't just about smaller living—it's about safer living. It's an investment in security, comfort, and peace of mind for the years ahead.

## Building a Winning Transition Plan

A successful downsizing starts with understanding that you're not just moving furniture—you're recreating home in a more suitable space. Here's a step-by-step process to ensure that your parent's move becomes the start of an exciting new stage—not the beginning of the end.

### STEP 1: Start Early—and Start with Empathy

Begin by acknowledging the emotions involved. Instead of focusing on loss, reframe the conversation around safety and comfort:

*“We want your next space to feel perfect for the way you live now.”*

Listening—really listening—is the foundation of dignity. This is as much an emotional journey as a logistical one.

### Caregiver Tip

Approach the talk as planning together, not persuading.

### STEP 2: Honor the Past—Embrace the Future

Most moves mean less space, so you'll need to pare down what's taken. A few intentional steps can make the process meaningful rather than painful. Ask your loved one to create a wish list—the items that truly make them feel at home:

- *“What furniture or photos bring you joy?”*
- *“Which items tell the story of your life together?”*
- *“What couldn't you imagine your day without?”*

Write down those priority pieces. They'll guide later decisions and reassure your loved one that their voice matters.

**Remember:** Home is more than a place—it's a feeling. That feeling comes from memories you carry, not just the objects you keep. You're not erasing a lifetime—you're distilling it.

**Ways to preserve family treasures while letting go include:**

- Photographing rooms or collections for a memory album.
- Digitizing letters, photos, or videos.
- Creating shadow boxes or framed collages of special pieces.

### **STEP 3: Enlist a Senior Move Manager**

Hiring a Senior Move Manager (SMM) may be the single best way to protect both your parent's well-being and your relationships. These trained professionals coordinate every detail—floor plans, packing, donation management, and setup—so you can focus on emotional support instead of logistics.

### **What's a Senior Move Manager — and Why You Need One!**

A Senior Move Manager (SMM) is a trained professional who helps older adults and families manage every aspect of downsizing and relocation. They specialize in the physical, emotional, and logistical details that make moving later in life uniquely challenging.

Unlike traditional movers who simply pack and deliver boxes, a move manager provides wrap-around support—from the first conversation to the moment your loved one walks into a perfectly set-up new home.

#### **What A Senior Move Manager Does For You:**

- Develop a personalized floor plan to ensure safety and comfort.
- Coordinate sorting, packing, moving, unpacking and donations.
- Manage unpacking, home set-up, and re-create familiar spaces in the new home.
- Serve as a neutral, compassionate voice when family emotions run high.
- Oversee post-move details such as estate cleanouts, shipping, or resale.

## An Expert's Top 5 Insider Tips

**Laura Olivares, Co-Founder Silver Solutions is one of the country's most experienced Senior Move Managers**

- 1. Listen before you label** – *“Your parent’s stories reveal what’s meaningful—those are the things that make the new space feel like home.”*
- 2. Create a reality list** – *“Turn the wish list into what fits safely. A move manager helps balance emotion with logistics.”*
- 3. Re-create the familiar** – *“Photograph key setups—the nightstand, the living-room table—to replicate them in the new home. Familiarity lowers anxiety.”*
- 4. Move first, edit later** – *“Relocate your loved one before tackling leftovers. It keeps the move positive and avoids reliving every goodbye.”*
- 5. Hire a Move Manager** – *“The best moves happen when a professional oversees the process with empathy, efficiency, and care.”*

### To Hear More from Laura Olivares

[Click Here](#) to listen to her full Age Wise Interview

#### STEP 4: Choose Movers Who Understand Seniors

Not all movers are created equal. If you decide to manage the move yourself, make sure the movers you hire are reputable and experienced with older adults. Choose companies that are:

- Licensed and insured.
- Members of the Better Business Bureau, with no history of complaints.
- Patient and respectful with seniors.
- Willing to accommodate last-minute, emotionally driven changes.

Compassionate movers reduce stress and ensure safety on moving day.

## **STEP 5: Plan for What Comes After the Move**

Many families forget about the “**second act**” of downsizing—dealing with what’s left behind.

**Silver Solutions calls this Home Emptying, a structured process that includes:**

- Sorting items for donation and recycling.
- Coordinating with appraisers or resellers for valuable collectibles.
- Managing family distribution and shipping.
- Shredding outdated financial and legal documents.

Whenever possible, move Mom or Dad first so they can “shop from home” for their favorites while professionals handle the remainder later. And as Laura Olivares reminds us, *“Remember, it’s not just stuff—it’s memories and the legacy that will live on for generations. You need to give yourself time to process what’s left behind.”*

## **A Dignified, Compassionate Transition**

Handled with planning, empathy, and expert support, downsizing can be a turning point toward increased comfort, safety and renewed happiness. It’s not the end of a story—it’s the beginning of a simpler, freer chapter.

**Start early. Listen deeply. Bring in professionals when needed. And remember:** dignity and compassion are the true measures of success!

### **Caregiver Tip**

Be there for the person - not for the boxes.

## Key Takeaways

- **Downsizing is emotional—but proactive planning makes it empowering.**  
Every object holds meaning, so the process must be guided with empathy. Starting early prevents crisis-driven decisions and preserves dignity.
- **Knowing when to downsize is about more than space.**  
Physical changes—reduced mobility, vision, balance, and stamina—make large or cluttered homes unsafe. Recognizing these shifts early ensures a smoother and safer transition.
- **The goal isn't just a smaller home—it's a safer, more supportive one.**  
A successful move re-creates the feeling of home in a right-sized space that maximizes safety, comfort, and future independence.
- **A Senior Move Manager (SMM) can dramatically reduce stress.**  
SMMs coordinate floor planning, sorting, packing, donations, unpacking, and recreating familiar spaces—all while serving as a neutral, compassionate guide for families.
- **Family relationships stay healthier when professionals manage the logistics.**  
Let the family focus on emotional support while trained specialists handle the physical work, decision fatigue, and inevitable “last-minute changes.”
- **What happens after the move matters just as much.**  
Home Emptying—donations, recycling, shredding, family distribution—is a structured, essential second phase. Moving the senior first keeps the process positive and avoids re-processing every item.

# Age Wise

THE FAMILY CAREGIVER'S GUIDE TO  
WHAT TO EXPECT AS YOUR PARENTS AGE

---

From Silver Solutions

By Dan Lagani & Laura Olivares



SILVER SOLUTIONS®

[www.silversolutions.com](http://www.silversolutions.com)