

A FREE WILLOWBARROW FAMILY GUIDE

The Levels-of-Living Family Worksheet

Use this simple worksheet to notice what kind of community life may feel most comfortable, supportive, and realistic for your parent right now.



Willowbarrow is a free matching and guide service, not a senior-living provider, broker, or government agency. We give no medical, legal, or financial advice, and we never collect medical records or immigration documents. Costs and rules vary by community, city, and state, so always confirm details directly with a community before deciding.

Questions? Write to hello@willowbarrow.com - or get matched, free, at willowbarrow.pages.dev/get-matched/

How to use this worksheet

This guide is not a test, and there is no wrong answer. Many families are simply looking for the best fit for today, knowing needs can change over time.

A parent may be happy in one setting now and want more support later. That is normal. The goal is to match daily life, preferences, and comfort level as they are today.

- Think about what a usual week looks like, not just a best day or hardest day.
- If more than one option seems to fit, that is okay.
- Bring your parent into the conversation when possible, and listen for what matters most to them.

Active-adult 55+

Active-adult 55+ communities are usually designed for older adults who want a simpler lifestyle, social opportunities, and a home among peers. These communities generally focus on convenience, activities, and low-maintenance living rather than personal care.

This option may fit someone who is fully managing daily tasks on their own and mainly wants community, amenities, and less upkeep.

- Does your parent handle bathing, dressing, meals, medications, and transportation without regular help?
- Are they mainly looking for social life, hobbies, and a home that is easier to maintain?
- Would they enjoy living around neighbors in a similar stage of life?



Independent living

Independent living is for older adults who want a community setting with fewer household responsibilities. It often includes things like meals, housekeeping, events, and transportation options, while residents remain largely independent.

This can be a good fit for someone who does not need hands-on daily care but would benefit from more convenience, structure, and connection.

- Is cooking, cleaning, or home maintenance becoming tiring or stressful?
- Would your parent enjoy having meals, activities, and neighbors nearby?
- Do they feel isolated at home, even if they are managing okay?
- Would a simpler routine help them save energy for the things they enjoy?

Assisted living

Assisted living offers housing, meals, social life, and staff support with daily activities such as bathing, dressing, medication reminders, or getting around. Residents often have private apartments or rooms, with help available as needed.

This option may fit when living alone is becoming harder, but your parent still wants as much independence as possible in a supportive setting.

- Does your parent need regular help with bathing, dressing, grooming, or medications?
- Have falls, missed meals, confusion about routines, or trouble getting around become more common?
- Would they feel safer with staff nearby and help available each day?
- Is family support starting to feel hard to coordinate consistently at home?



Continuing care

Continuing care communities offer multiple levels of living in one place, often including independent living, assisted living, and sometimes memory-friendly or higher-support care. The idea is that a person can stay within the same community if needs change.

This may appeal to families who want more long-term flexibility and a plan for possible future support.

- Does your parent like the idea of moving once and staying in one community as needs change?
- Would your family feel more at ease knowing more support may be available later?
- Is planning ahead important, even if your parent is doing fairly well today?
- Would continuity of neighbors, routines, and surroundings be comforting?

Memory-friendly options

Memory-friendly options are designed for people living with memory loss, confusion, or changes in judgment that affect daily safety and routine. These settings usually provide more structure, specialized support, and environments designed to reduce stress and help residents feel secure.

This may be worth exploring if memory changes are making independent daily life difficult or if a parent needs regular guidance and reassurance.

- Does your parent get lost, forget important steps, wander, or seem unsafe alone?
- Are memory changes affecting meals, medications, hygiene, or day-night routines?
- Do they need frequent reminders, redirection, or calming support during the day?
- Would a more structured setting help them feel settled and supported?



A gentle check-in for the whole family

As you review these options, focus on daily life: safety, energy, social connection, routine, and how much help is truly needed. Try to separate what has always worked from what is getting harder now.

It is okay if the answer is not obvious. Many families narrow it down to two good options and compare them. What matters most is finding a setting that respects your parent's dignity, preferences, and current needs.

- What does your parent most want to keep: privacy, friendships, routine, independence, or easy access to help?
- What parts of the day go smoothly, and what parts feel hard?
- How much support is needed now, and how much may be helpful soon?
- Which option sounds most comfortable, not just most practical?

If you want help turning these notes into real options, Willowbarrow can match your family with senior-living communities for free, in your language, with no pressure.



