

# MARY WADE



*A five star senior community with a tradition of quality healthcare*

*A MARY WADE WHITEPAPER*

## ***My Elderly Mother Won't Leave Her House!***

Intelligent and well-meaning conversations, intended to improve the life of an elderly loved-one, are often interpreted as cruel and unusual punishment by the loved-one. For caregivers, those sensitive conversations often result in feelings of guilt, anxiety and self-loathing.

If you are caring for an elderly parent or spouse, you probably have direct knowledge of such uncomfortable conversations. You also understand the most difficult conversation of all is the one about an elderly senior – “*leaving their home.*” Few things are more challenging than:

*Convincing mother she needs to start thinking about attending an adult day center.*

If you can relate to this; you are not alone!

### **Isolation and Loneliness Can Kill**

Caregivers know, instinctively, isolating is not healthy, and they want their loved-ones to be healthy and happy. Caregivers watch their seniors slowly decline – mentally and emotionally. However, the loved-one often feels they are surviving okay, and they don't need to change. Seniors especially don't want to leave their homes – it terrifies them.

To understand the dread that some seniors experience when they think about leaving their homes and entering an adult day facility, it is useful to understand social isolation and how seniors believe it helps them:

First, it is not uncommon for an elderly person to choose to isolate from friends and family. They believe if they simplify their lives, and repeat the same things every day, they can exist, indefinitely, by themselves.

Second, many seniors believe they will be miserable if they leave their homes, even for a few hours, and go into an adult care center. Consequently, they do everything possible to manage life on their own, including social isolation. They accept loneliness over leaving their familiar and safe environments.

The danger is that seniors who isolate too long can become extremely lonely and clinically depressed. If deep loneliness and depression set in, the senior may simply give up. In that case, they see no reason for change and, unfortunately, will resist any outside help.

In a study done by McMaster University in 2016, it was found that a lack of social relationships and loneliness in the elderly is **as strong a risk factor for death** as are:

- Smoking
- Obesity
- Lack of physical activity

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That is a significant finding. With people living much longer, it stands to reason that social isolation and loneliness become major problems as elderly people age and their world gets smaller and smaller.

### **What to do?**

For caregivers, especially the children of seniors, providing the right level of care is often difficult, if not impossible. When it becomes obvious that an adult day center is a reasonable option, then that is the time to have...*a difficult discussion*...with the senior loved-one.

Because every situation is different, there is no script or formula for convincing an elderly senior that it is time to seek professional help. At Mary Wade, we suggest calling our Adult Care Center staff and tell them about your situation. The staff is trained and willing to share their knowledge and expertise, as well as the vast experience Mary Wade gained over the past 150 years. There are excellent methods and techniques to help – *convince mother she needs to think about going into an adult day care center*. And, you can feel good that you are making the best decision for your loved-one.

Mary Wade is here to help.