

Downsizing event aimed at helping seniors

By Julie M. Cohen
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Seniors grappling with whether or not to downsize and move from their larger homes have many resources to help them make their decisions, including a free upcoming event at Newton's Temple Emanuel on Sunday, May 6.

The talk being given by Newton resident Karen Wasserman, LICSW, MSW, is called, "When is the right time to move from your home? When is the right time to give up driving?"

According to the temple, Wasserman has worked with seniors and their families for 27 years as a medical social worker at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and a director of social services at a nursing and rehabilitation facility. She also started the care management program, Your Elder Experts, at Jewish Family and Children's Services in 1999.

Wicked Local recently interviewed Wasserman by email about her upcoming event.

What are some of the common reasons seniors begin to think about downsizing?

Older adults may not want/cannot afford/manage their home that suited them when they were younger. Some older adults are not safe with stairs, may need more accessible living space, or just want to be less isolated. Not

all homes can be easily or affordably made accessible.

What do you advise seniors to do if they want to remain in their city/town (in this case, Newton) but perhaps don't have the financial resources to do so even after they sell their homes?

There are many options for housing based on income and assets. There are subsidized apartments and affordable retirement communities. If someone has limited financial resources it is important to plan in advance as affordable units often come with longer waiting lists.

What are some of the toughest decisions seniors have to make while in the process of downsizing?

For some people it is hard to part with their things, whether it is a family heirloom or filing cabinets full of taxes for the past 30 years. I think the next hardest thing is finding out that their dear possessions are not worth a lot of money should they want to sell them. Unless they have collectable items or very valuable items in good condition, furniture, glassware, etc., it is not going to sell for much and might need to be donated.

What would you suggest seniors and their families do if a senior does not want to downsize but should for safety/health reasons?

Every situation is a little different. I would recommend that families seek professional sup-

port to either help their older relative move to a more appropriate setting or to access the services needed to stay safely where they are. For many older adults it is extremely awkward and unacceptable to have their children tell them what to do, so bringing in a professional who can speak from a more neutral perspective can be useful.

What are some of the suggestions you have for seniors who would like to remain in their homes?

Reach out to organizations like Newton At Home, check out their local senior center and possibly speak with an Aging Life Care professional to understand how they can best utilize all of the resources in their community.

EVENT DETAILS

What: "When is the right time to move from your home? When is the right time to give up driving?" is a free presentation given by Karen Wasserman, LICSW, MSW

Where: Sunday, May 6, from 10:30 a.m. - noon

Where: Temple Emanuel (Adelson Hall), 385 Ward St., in Newton.

The event is sponsored by Benchmark in conjunction with senior programming at Temple Emanuel. Dessert will be served from 10:30-11 a.m. Please RSVP to Tracy Schneider at 617-959-4928 or Tracy.Schneider@yahoo.com.

