

Shared Housing Is Good For You

By Roxanne Cornell

Life is good! Your kids are grown and have families of their own. You have reached that time in life when you're free to pursue your favorite pastimes. Yet returning to an empty home can feel so lonely.

We need companionship if we are to remain healthy and involved in life. Some studies show that the impact of isolation and loneliness on our health may be equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day. Baby boomers especially often find it hard to admit that we need anybody.

An 80-year-long Harvard study published in 2017 found that the key to living a longer, healthier life may be having a sense of community as you age. Maintaining healthy relationships is as important as taking care of your physical needs.

Those with the best relationships at age 50 were the healthiest at age 80. The study confirms what I've observed in my own career as a clinical social worker: Having close,

happy relationships is a powerful influence on health and how well you flourish as you age.

Shared housing is helping to fix this social gap for active, independent baby boomers. In fact, baby boomers have a broader view of the types of services and options they want as they enter the last 30 years of their lives. That's why some corporations are now designing massive adult living complexes that offer travel services, healthier meals and other amenities that suit a more active lifestyle.

But you and I know that not everyone will thrive while living in a big complex. You can be lonely surrounded by people. The quality of your relationships matters.

Another alternative shared living environment is to share a single-family residence. This is my intent



with creating Vibrante Living, a shared living complex for four independent senior women. If you want to pursue this type of option, you may want to look for something that offers similar amenities as a big complex but on a smaller, more personal scale.

Remember, community and independence are not mutually exclusive. If such activities as shopping, theatre and sporting events are important to you, then they should be part of your checklist.

Just because you're older doesn't mean you suddenly lose interest in the things you've been passionate about. In fact, now you may even have more time and energy to enjoy them. If you're considering shared housing, look for a location that will enable you to continue living life on your terms, regardless of your age.

Roxanne J. Cornell is the owner and founder of Vibrante, a shared living community that combines an urban, private home setting with concierge services. To learn more, go to vibrante.com.

