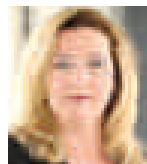




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**Tania Haluk**, RCM, BA  
Vice-president,  
High-rise Management  
FirstService Residential

# Generational Relationships in Condominiums

How we can and should always be excellent to each other

Each condominium community can be perceived as its own unique microcosm. The days of lifestyle communities have now evolved into multi-generational housing. We can leverage the benefits of having young professionals, new families, empty nesters and the elderly all living together in one community.

The challenge for condominium managers is to find the balance where all generations are able to be engaged and have the benefit of feeling like they are part of the community and not in a hotel-like setting with transient people coming and going.

There are a variety of unique needs and requirements as we age and travel through the various stages of life. For the

purpose of this article, we will define the requested needs from the most common groups of generations of people in condominiums and tips on how to support them under one roof.

## **Connected Working Professionals**

With the young professional community, who are still learning and actively trying to gain experience and move up the ladder, the work day is different than a few decades ago. Accessibility to people is now available around the clock in this immediate need, electronic age. Smart phones have created an environment where work and home life are more intertwined and less defined

by start and stop times. It doesn't take much to look around and see how many people are on their phones while sitting with friends or family right in front of them. Networking, wi-fi, online groups, profiles and immediate information are important aspects in daily life. Setting up hot spots in condominiums is a simple task and online community information, such as web portals or group forums, is a growing demand. There is a great opportunity to partner tech-savvy people with those who may need some coaching on how to engage with the online community for both social and maintenance-related issues. Some amenity spaces have computers available for use or have people come to instruct



residents on how to make the best use of the equipment you have.

Families have different needs and in densely populated areas, it may be difficult to find play areas for children to run around, meet other kids and burn off some energy. Although the corridors or roads are not safe or appropriate areas to hang around, there are more creative alternatives with new indoor and outdoor playgrounds. Some amenity spaces are geared just to children, which include smaller tables and chairs, libraries, gaming systems, toy areas and jungle gyms. Having a special area or social times for children and families not only provides a safe space, but also has a noise control aspect for those who value quiet enjoyment in their space. Connecting families together has proven effective in condominiums as this networking helps families find assistance for their needs and has led to groups for play dates, babysitting,

sharing local knowledge for support, supplies and services. This is especially helpful for single working parents, who may need a break and can offer assistance to each other.

### **Encourage Empty Nesters**

Empty nesters can have the biggest challenge of moving into a condominium – particularly if coming from a large private home. The transition to a smaller, more densely populated, noisier and rule-compliant home where repair and maintenance timing are controlled by others, can be arduous for some. The simplest solution is to arrange for a volunteer group to be the warm welcome committee to assist people in acclimatizing to the new living arrangement and provide an introduction to the community culture. Some are ready for this new arrangement and enjoy the freedom of turn-key living and joining new social groups in the community. It should be recognized that this could be

a struggle for some and with encouragement and networking, it can turn an anxious situation into a pleasant one. Pot luck social events are a great way to interact and meet your neighbours, in addition to discovering some amazing new cuisines.

### **Accessibility for Elderly Residents**

The elderly can have difficulty with respect to health – both physical and mental. We are seeing an increase in residents who are struggling with dementia, Alzheimer's and other ailments that require specialized care. Managers have the additional challenge of finding the balance of being helpful versus intrusive, and also managing the needs of the entire building versus for a few whose needs may take a lot of time. Some of the physical needs include accessibility in common areas, which can be easily taken care of such as parking spaces, door openers, ramps and lifts. There are times when family and care giver involvement is required to develop plans to facilitate a safe and happy accommodation in a condominium or make the decision for an assisted living placement. We have found that this group wants and organizes a vast amount of social interaction and has a knack for finding expertise within the community. This ranges from bridge and poker clubs to dance lessons and even car pooling.

Ultimately, in condominium living, you will get from the community what you give to it. You can mind your own business, keep to yourself and the manager will maintain the common elements around you. On the other hand, there are a lot of great people in this world with vast experiences and different cultural backgrounds that we can all learn something from and teach someone about. It all starts with a friendly wave or smile and a reminder to be excellent to each other. Everyone has an interesting story and life is too short for thoughtlessness. Cooperation here is key and ensuring the condominium community is the right fit for your needs. ■

**Tania Haluk**, RCM is vice-president high-rise management, FirstService Residential. You can reach Tania at [tania.haluk@fsresidential.com](mailto:tania.haluk@fsresidential.com) [fsresidential.com](http://fsresidential.com)