

## Tips for Downsizing a Home

By Brenda Sangster, Caregiver Support Coordinator, Capital District

For many of us, downsizing is challenging and stressful. It can be difficult to part with our possessions. Take a look around your home and think about the items you love and use – these are the first to go with you. Surrounding yourself with the things you love will help you feel more at home when you move.

**1. Sort through what you want to keep and be ruthless about what enters into your new space.** If you can't decide on certain items, ask yourself: "Have I used this in the past year? Am I likely to use it in the near future? Would it be difficult or costly for me to get another one?" Pick the best and let go of the rest!

**2. If possible, start thinning out your belongings *before* the move.** Take some time each day or one morning or evening each week.

**3. Never duplicate if you can help it.** Do you really need two blenders or coffee pots?

**4. Go through your home and clear every cabinet, shelf, and closet.** If you haven't used it in the past six months, out it goes. For financial papers, keep only what you need (the 'rule of thumb' is 7 years for income taxes). Remember to shred older files.

**5. Get a feel for the size of your new rooms.** Take out a measuring tape to measure your furniture's dimensions and pair them up with the amount of space in your smaller space. This will help you decide what to keep and what to give away.

**6. Bathrooms should have only what you use each day.** Do you really need those little bottles of shampoo and conditioner from hotels? Pull everything out and discard expired medications and unwanted cosmetics.

**7. Get organized.** Label three bins/boxes with – To Keep, To Sell, and To Charity. Limit your collection. Label the bins/boxes that you are going to keep and indicate where you want them to go in your new home (bathroom, master bedroom, kitchen, etc.)

**8. Move large items first.** Place furniture in the rooms as you go, according to the plan made earlier. This will give you a better idea of where the smaller items should go.

**9. Organize your space as you unpack.** Utilize closets and cupboards as you unpack.

**10. Earn money back while you move.** The most beneficial tip for downsizing your home is to sell anything you don't need, want, or have space for. As the old saying goes "one person's trash is another person's treasure"! This doesn't mean your stuff is trash but if space is scarce, what's better than seeing some of that money back?

