



Sensitivity to Seniors

Considering many couples are marrying later in life, the chances for more senior guests are greater. Taking the time to make sure these guests are comfortable and worth noting during the planning process. Here are a few tips:

Venue Accessibility. Some seniors have difficulty walking and require the use of a cane or wheelchair. When touring possible venues, look for elevators, wheel chair ramps, bathroom placement and wide hallways. This will allow easier access for guests throughout the day. Keep an eye for pull through driveways, covered awnings and handicapped parking. These features provide a way for senior guests to be dropped off at the door or shorter distance to the ceremony or reception. Be sure to advise venues in advance if seniors will need help so they may adjust as needed to accommodate.

Transportation. Seniors may have difficulty acquiring transportation to locations too far from their own. Fear of driving after dark or in inclement weather is common. If location is not near your senior loved ones, coordinate transportation for them. Venues that allow ceremony and reception in one location are a big advantage to seniors.

Reception Layout. When planning the reception, place tables with room for a wheelchair or walker in between them. Seat seniors with easy access to the restrooms.

Buddy System. Assigning a member of the wedding party, good friend or family member to senior guests, especially handicapped, is a comforting touch for what could be an overwhelming event for them. This is a great way to introduce two new people together as well as get some interaction between the different age groups. Invite caregivers where appropriate and provide a layout of the venue in the program or just for them. Also ask the venue for additional attention if needed for one or more seniors. Be specific – servers will respond better to “ only decaf for Aunt Sally” as apposed to “take extra good care of her.” Go over special instructions with the venue prior to the wedding day.

Speaking Volumes. Speaking of the program, many seniors have difficulty hearing, resulting in them disturbing neighbors with loud “What’s?”. Print vows, verses, hymns and sermons. My 93 year-old mother-in-law and her friends each receive the Sunday sermon in writing from their minister and love this little feature of the program. Having the ceremony written allows them to feel part of the ceremony without having to read lips (as so many often do ... don’t tell them I’m giving away their secret!) This also adds a VIP feel for seniors!

Creating an enjoyable and relaxing day with a little extra TLC for those special senior guests is a wonderful way to say thank you for their love and support along the way!

Stoneleigh Event Consultant Meredith Thomas is available for additional planning services on a fee basis. Meredith has many years of experience planning special events and will work with you to create the wedding of your dreams. Contact Meredith at mthomas@stoneleighgolf.com to learn more.