

Creating Spaces that Age Gracefully, *Too!*

By: Larri Ann Craig, Senior Living Business Development Manager for Touch of Color Flooring

Senior living communities have an incredible responsibility to help our loved ones age safely and gracefully and ensure that the special needs of senior adults are taken into account when they create a space. Of all the surfaces in a building that Seniors touch, flooring has one of the biggest impact on them. From life's biggest moments to routine experiences, it's easy to forget the role flooring plays in our lives. But for senior communities who exist to help our loved ones age safely and gracefully, flooring should be given some carefully attention. It can create a warm and friendly environment, be sustainable for the team to upkeep as well as safe and slip resistant for the resident.

At Touch of Color Flooring, I have the pleasure of working specifically with senior living team members to understand a community as a whole, its values and goals, and the needs of its current residents and staff. What I've found to be the most common mistake is only focusing on one factor, like cost, and not giving equal consideration to the longevity, maintenance, safety, or finishes of their flooring selections. While budget is an important factor, cost should not always be the focus. Long term you don't achieve the best outcomes, for the resident or your business.

For anyone who is looking to upgrade the style and finishes of flooring in their communities, especially for spaces where senior adults interact, there are some new trends which are proving to be as stylish as they are functional. Foremost, carpet tile in common areas is really taking off! It's durable, versatile, easy to replace, and comes in a wide variety of patterns and colors. Additionally, vinyl plank or vinyl tile looks are becoming increasingly popular especially in Memory Care or Assisted Living settings. What's most important is to keep your goals for the end product in mind.

What type of feel do you want to the space to have? How will it be used and how often? With a clear purpose for the space, you can better tailor the possible solutions to meet your needs.

If making these selections feels burdensome or overwhelming, it doesn't have to. Oftentimes you just need the right partner. I work alongside communities to provide flooring solutions for all facets of Senior Living, whether it be Independent Living, Assisted Living, Skilled Nursing Facility, Personal Care, Memory Care, Continuing Care Retirement Communities. It's important to work with someone who understands the importance of safety, who can be onsite for installs, and who has an experienced team that really understands the unique needs of senior living facilities.

TOC is unique in that we have a team that only works for Senior Living Communities. We are dedicated to continuing to learn about all areas of Senior Living so that we can fully understand

and encompass what the teams go through daily, as well as what the safest and most up to date flooring is out there. We are constantly striving to provide top notch service and be a trusted partner to the communities we serve.

What I love most is creating solutions that stand the test of time – and that can age as gracefully as the residents we serve. Senior living facilities have the most important role of meeting the physical and emotional needs of our senior population. And to do so, they need a functional yet beautiful space where this can take place without worry of accident, injury, or excessive wear and tear. It's a hard truth, but also a beautiful one. For many residents, this is the last flooring their feet will touch in this lifetime. We can all do our job to make the space in which these final chapters take place as safe and welcoming as possible!

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