

WHAT TO LOOK FOR & WHAT QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN CHOOSING A SENIOR COMMUNITY



Name of Senior Community _____

Address _____

Telephone Number: _____ Email: _____

Contact Person: _____ Date of visit: _____

GENERAL INFORMATION

- _____ Is there a waitlist for the senior care community?
If so, for how long?
- _____ What are the fees associated with living at the community?
(Deposit, Monthly Fees, Additional Occupant Fee, Etc.)
- _____ Is the atmosphere of the community home-like and pleasing to you?
- _____ Is the temperature inside comfortable?
- _____ When are visiting hours?

LOCATION

- _____ Is the community located in a safe and crime-free area?
- _____ Is the location convenient for family and friends to visit?
- _____ Are there shopping centers and entertainment nearby?
- _____ How far away is the nearest hospital/medical offices?

COMMUNITY & SAFETY

- _____ Is the community clean and well maintained?
- _____ Is there adequate parking, including handicapped parking?
- _____ Is the parking area well lit at night?
- _____ Is the community handicap-accessible (doorways, sidewalks, hallways, rooms and bathrooms)?
- _____ Are there features like handrails in the hallways and elevators if the community has more than one floor?
- _____ Are staff members dressed appropriately and wearing nametags at all times?
- _____ Is there a 24-hour emergency response system? (Request to see it and make sure it is accessible from the bathroom, the main living area and the bedroom.)
- _____ Are the exits clearly marked and unobstructed?
- _____ Are there different sized apartments available? What are the costs?
- _____ What bills are paid by the community and what are residents responsible for? (Telephone, internet, cable, water, electricity, etc.)
- _____ Are there smoke alarms and sprinklers in every apartment and throughout the community?
- _____ Does the community allow pets and is there a designated area for them outdoors?
- _____ Are apartments furnished or unfurnished?
- _____ Are residents allowed to decorate their apartments as they like?

PERSONAL CARE & ASSISTANCE

- _____ If extra help is temporarily needed (i.e. home care or therapy), is there someone available to help coordinate those needs?
- _____ If one needs assistance with some activities of daily living (like a shower or bath), is there someone available to help? How much would that cost and what agency would provide those services?
- _____ At what point would one be required to move to a higher level of care like assisted living or nursing care?
- _____ Are housekeeping and/or laundry services included in the monthly fee? If not, how much would these additional services cost?
- _____ Does a doctor or nurse check on residents regularly?
- _____ Does the community provide updates on the resident's condition to family members?

PROGRAM SERVICES

- _____ Is there a monthly calendar posted of all community activities?
- _____ Ask for a copy of the current month's activity calendar.
- _____ Is transportation available for shopping, physician appointments and for other errands?
- _____ How will the resident be charged for these?
- _____ Is fitness a part of the calendar?
- _____ Are there designated areas for craft groups and clubs?
- _____ Are there resident groups and organizations?
- _____ Are there scheduled outings to entertainment complexes and events in the community on a weekly basis?
- _____ Are the outdoor spaces for walking, gardening, etc?

DINING SERVICES

- _____ Does the dining room and kitchen look and smell clean?
- _____ Are the tables and chairs clean?
- _____ How many meals are included in the monthly fee, and what are the costs for additional meals?
- _____ Are residents allowed to bring guests to meals? What is the cost?
- _____ Can the community accommodate special dietary needs?
- _____ Is a dietician involved in menu planning?
- _____ Is a resident committee involved in menu planning?
- _____ Are meals available only during set hours? Are beverages and snacks available at other times?

CURRENT RESIDENTS

Introduce yourself to residents you pass on the tour.

Ask them:

- _____ How long they've lived there and how they like it.
- _____ What they like and don't like about the community.
- _____ Take notice of the residents. Do they seem clean and cared for?
- _____ Seem friendly and welcoming?
- _____ Seem content and relaxed while eating in the dining area?

ALZHEIMER'S AND DEMENTIA CARE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

- _____ Are the doors locked with a system in place to alert staff if a resident wanders out?
- _____ Is there a secure outdoor area for residents to use?
- _____ Pay attention to the noise level in the building. Is there a lot of overhead paging? Does the staff shout from one end of the hallway to another? (Excessive noise can be confusing to persons with memory loss.)
- _____ Does the calendar of activities and events show a consistent and planned daily schedule?
- _____ Are there activities that help a resident feel busy and productive?
- _____ Is the resident assigned seating so they eat very meal in the same spot?
- _____ Are finger foods served if a resident is no longer able to utilize silverware?
- _____ How are nutritional needs monitored?
- _____ How is staff screened for their ability to work with Alzheimer's and dementia residents?
- _____ Observe the staff interaction with residents. Is it positive, calm and respectful?