



Looking for an Assisted Living or Memory Care Home

Most people are drawn to a home, because of how it looks. Our brains have been programmed to think real estate and crown molding, but in Assisted Living and Memory Care **the most important part is not what is on the walls, but who is walking the floor**. The caregivers and the care they are providing is what is truly important. Spa tubs will not be approaching, communicating, and being a support. The caregivers will be, and they are the ones who can give the hugs!

Other items to consider are as follows:

Atmosphere

- Did you receive a warm greeting and welcome from staff members?
- Does the residence director/staff call the residents by their names and interact warmly with them?
- Do the residents socialize with one another and appear happy and comfortable?
- Do the residents seem to be appropriate housemates?

Physical Features

- Is the residence clean, free of odors and appropriately heated/cooled?
- Does the residence meet local and state licensing requirements?
- When was their last State survey and how did they do? Ask to see Citations, which should be posted for all to see within the home or can be checked via the Wisconsin Department of Health Services website.

Food Service

- Does the residence provide three well-balanced meals a day, seven days a week?
- Are snacks available between meals?
- Are common dining rooms available?
- May a resident eat a meal in his or her room and may they request special/favorite meals or snacks?
- Do the employees eat with the residents and do they enjoy the food?

Needs Assessments, Contracts, Costs, and Finances

- Is there a written plan for the care of each resident?
- What is the process for assessing a potential resident's needs and how often is this updated after move-in?
- Does this process include the resident, their family, staff members and the resident's healthcare provider?
- When may a contract be terminated and what are the refund policies?
- Are additional services available if the resident's needs change?
- Are there different costs for various levels or categories of services?
- Can the person stay regardless of behavioral or end-of-life issues or will they need to be moved?
- When was the last time they had to move someone due to behavioral concerns? End-of-life concerns?

Medications, Health Care and Training

- Does the residence have specific policies regarding storage of and assistance with medications, training and supervision of staff, and record keeping?
- Is there a staff member to help coordinate medical and therapy visits, if needed?
- Are staff members able to assist residents who decline in memory, orientation, or decision-making skills?
- Does a physician or nurse visit the resident regularly to provide medical checkups?
- Does the residence have a clearly stated procedure for responding to resident's medical emergencies?
- To what extent are medical services available and how are these services provided?
- Is the staff knowledgeable about medications specific to your love one?
- Are staff trained in proper lifting techniques and is a mechanical lift available, in the event your loved one is no longer able to walk or lift themselves?
- How are the staff trained in aging or if needed, dementia issues? What is the length of the training and when does it occur (orientation, after 6 months of employment, etc...)? What is covered in the training?

Services Offered

- Can the residence provide a list of services it provides?
- Is the staff available to provide 24-hour assistance with activities of daily living as needed (i.e., dressing, eating, mobility, hygiene/grooming, bathing, toileting, incontinence, telephone use, and laundry)?
- Does the residence provide housekeeping services in each resident's rooms?
- Does the residence provide laundry and linen services to each resident?
- Does the residence provide transportation to healthcare appointments? If not, how are visits arranged?
- Can arrangements be made for transportation on short notice?
- Are pharmacy, physical therapy, podiatry, dental, etc... services offered on-site?
- Does the residence provide a hairdresser, shopping trips, and community outings?

Individual Features of the Home

- Do dining room menus display a variety from day to day and meal to meal?
- Are there different sizes and types of resident rooms available?
- Are resident room's single or double occupancy?
- Are there private baths or shared bathrooms?
- Are bathroom areas equipped with handicapped accommodations and depth perception aids?
- Are residents able to bring their own furniture or what furniture does the home supply?
- Do all rooms have telephone and cable television hook-ups? How is the bill for these services handled?

Social and Recreational Activities

- Is there evidence of an organized activity program (i.e. posted calendars, activities in progress, reading materials available, video movies, daily newspapers delivered, etc.)? Ask for a copy of the calendar.
- What are the three most enjoyed activities of the house?
- Do residents participate in activities outside of the residence?
- Do volunteers, including family members and friends, come to the residence for activity programs and events?
- Does the residence create a sense of community by having residents participate in group activities and simple work-type chores within their abilities?
- Are residents' pets allowed to live at the residence? Who is responsible for their care and what is the cost?

Residence Directors/Managers

- Was the residence director/manager friendly and informative?
- How long has the residence director/manager been with the facility and in the field?
- What is the background of the residence director/manger? Nurse etc...
- Would you enjoy dealing with the residence director/manager on a regular basis?

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