



SENIOR LIVING COMMUNITY CHECKLIST

Making the decision to relocate a loved one into a senior living community or community is an extremely difficult one. And once this decision has been made, selecting the most suitable place is yet another challenge. Placing your loved one in a new home will require research and careful consideration. To guide you in this process, we offer you the following checklist and useful tips to help you evaluate each community that you visit. Keep in mind that every community and every community is different. You should note the things that you like and dislike about each one. The importance that you place upon each question is up to you but remember to select a community that best meets the unique needs of your loved one.

Please print one checklist per community that you decide to visit.

Community Name _____ **Date Visited** _____
Address _____ **Telephone** _____
Contact Person _____

BEFORE YOU VISIT

Yes **No**

- Are new residents being accepted? If not, is there a waiting list?
- Are there restrictions regarding the type of residents that they accept?
- What is the basic daily rate?
- What services are provided in the basic daily rate?
- What costs extra?
- If applicable, is the community licensed?
- Is the location easy for family and friends to visit?

ATMOSPHERE/ENVIRONMENT

Yes **No**

- Does the community seem bright and cheerful?
- Is the community well lighted?
- Does the staff seem pleasant and courteous?
- Is the temperature comfortable?
- Is the community ever locked to the outside?
- Is the community accessible for residents with disabilities?
- Are there handrails throughout the community and grab bars in the bathroom?
- Is a comfortable outdoor area available to residents?
- Do the grounds appear well kept?



SERVICES AND AMENITIES

Yes No

- Do you like the size of the room?
- Are semi-private rooms available?
- Does the community provide different levels of care to meet the changing needs of your loved one?
- Is there a personal emergency response system or pull cord in place?
- Is transportation provided?
- Are laundry services provided?
- Is housekeeping provided?
- Does the community assist in medication management?
- If applicable, what is the community's smoking policy?
- Are there guest accommodations?
- Do the rooms have individual temperature controls?

MEALS

Yes No

- How many meals are included in the monthly rent?
- Is there a dietician on staff?
- Are residents offered variety and choice in meals?
- Does the food look appealing and smell good?
- Can the community meet special dietary needs?
- Are snacks and beverages available between meals?
- Are residents allowed to dine in their rooms? If so, are there extra charges?
- Are residents allowed to keep food in their rooms?
- Are residents allowed to have small appliances in their rooms (e.g., refrigerator or microwave)?
- Does the food being served actually reflect what is on the menu?

QUALITY OF CARE

Yes No

- Does staff interact with the residents in a warm and respectful manner?
- Does there appear to be an adequate ratio of staff per resident?
- Does the community appear clean?
- Is the community free from foul odors?
- Do residents appear clean, well groomed and appropriately dressed?
- Do the residents and/or families participate in care planning?

QUALITY OF LIFE



Yes No

- Do the residents seem happy?
- Do the residents appear active?
- Are there activities available? If so, is there an activity calendar?
- Is there an activity director on staff? If yes, are they professionally trained?
- Are activities provided for groups *and* individuals?
- Are planned trips arranged?
- Are activities provided on the week-end?
- Are certain cultural, religious or language needs met?
- Are pets allowed?
- Are visiting hours unrestricted?
- Can the community accommodate couples with different needs?

COSTS AND CONTRACTS

- Is there a contract or lease agreement?
- Are the policies written and available for review?
- Are the services and rates clearly outlined?
- Do you fully understand the charges for extra services, such as cable, private telephone, etc.
- Is there an entrance fee?
- Is there a deposit?
- Is there an application fee?

Other questions important to me in choosing a community:

General comments and concerns:

Tips:

- *While location may be important, finding a quality home is more important.*
- *Consider just “dropping in.”*
- *Ideally, it is best to visit a community more than once and at different times during the day or week.*
- *Consider a weekend visit when there is generally fewer staff per resident.*
- *Be careful not to judge the quality of a home by the age of the building or by the decor. Many wonderful homes are in older buildings and modestly decorated.*
- *Use your senses during your tour – LOOK, SMELL, LISTEN, TASTE, & TOUCH.*
- *Trust your intuition.*
- *Be sure you understand which services are provided in the basic monthly fee and which ones cost extra.*
- *Be sure to ask what the procedure is for medical emergencies.*
- *Taste the food and if time permits, order a tray or eat in the dining room.*
- *Try to visit at mealtime to make special observations about the food, dining, and feeding assistance.*
- *A licensed community should have its most recent state inspection posted. Ask what the deficiencies were and if they have been resolved.*
- *Talk with residents during your tour. Ask them how they like living there.*
- *Ask for information concerning the staff’s training, credentials, background and duration of employment.*
- *Find out if the community offers any special programs.*
- *Check to see if a scheduled activity is actually taking place.*
- *Ask if there is an active family and/or resident’s council. Make sure they operate independently of the staff.*
- *Be sure to ask about billing and payment procedures, lease cancellations, grievance policies, and refunding your deposit.*