

Live 2 B Healthy[®] Tips for Evaluating a New Senior Residence Community

It's hard enough contemplating moving, without worrying about how to choose your next home. Here are a few suggestions for evaluation.

Before you begin, take time to sit quietly and think about what's important to you. Take notes on a separate sheet of paper. These insights will help you find the residential option that best fits your lifestyle. Ponder such questions as:

- ❖ What are my favorite ways to spend my day?
- ❖ Am I a morning person, or more of a night owl?
- ❖ Am I a more formal person, or more casual?
- ❖ What constitutes a really terrific day?
- ❖ How much privacy do I want? Would I prefer to be in the mainstream, or would I enjoy more solitude?
- ❖ What amenities are important to have nearby or on-site: access to transportation, shopping, laundry, banking, a public meeting space, fitness and exercise, classes and education, group meals or restaurants? What else?
- ❖ Who are your favorite people to spend time with? Why?
- ❖ How much assistance would I like to have with daily chores and activities? Which ones?
- ❖ How close would I like to be (how many miles) to my family? Friends? Library? Gym? House of Worship? Barber shop or beauty salon? Shopping and restaurants?

Of these and other personal characteristics, which are crucial, and which are simply preferences? (It may help to prioritize your needs and wants.)

As you walk through each residence, consider the following:

What's my first impression, walking through the front door?

	Perfect!	I Like It: its fine.	Not good.	Terrible	I'm Not Sure	Does Not Apply
Is the facility clean, bright and inviting?						
Does the building seem residential or institutional?						
Did someone greet me/us in a genuinely welcoming manner?						
Do the residents appear comfortable and happy?						
Can I see myself living in this environment?						

Senior Community Review Questions

What's my impression of the nursing staff?

	Perfect!	I Like It: its fine.	Not good.	Terrible	I'm Not Sure	Does Not Apply
Do the staff appear happy and engaged, or just clocking their time?						
Are they friendly and respectful (without being condescending)?						
Are the staff attentive without hovering? Can I observe staff taking the time to assist residents?						
Do the staff speak loudly enough?						
What kinds of training do the staff receive?						
What are the staffing levels at various times throughout the day and week?						
Staff Notes:						

Activities and Amenities

	Perfect!	I Like It: its fine.	Not good.	Terrible	I'm Not Sure	Does Not Apply
What on-site activities are offered?						
What on-site amenities are offered?						
What fitness and learning opportunities are here?						
At first glance, does it appear that the residents socialize with each other? How and where?						
Is there a convenient, comfortable, private and inviting area where I can visit with friends and family who visit?						
Activities and Amenities Notes						

Senior Community Review Questions

Wellness and Nutrition

	Perfect!	I Like It: its fine.	Not good.	Terrible	I'm Not Sure	Does Not Apply
• Does the facility have a fall-prevention or balance-enhancement program?						
Is there an adequate variety of eating choices and menu options?						
• Is there an exercise facility on-site?						
Does the facility offer onsite exercise programs? If yes, how many days per week are classes offered?						
• Is there a variety of activities available, and does it vary depending on resident input?						
Is there a secure outdoor area where I can enjoy walking, lounging or even gardening?						
Wellness & Nutrition Notes						

A few more fitness-specific questions include:

- Does a certified personal trainer lead the exercise classes?
- Does your facility have proven test results documenting that your exercise programs improve balance and strength?
- Are your exercise programs customized for each individual?
- Is your exercise program included in the monthly fee?

Can I see myself enjoying life here, and doing the things I enjoy most?

In addition to the questions on pages one through four, you may want to consider amenities associated with *memory care*.

- What type of services and programming are provided to address the needs of those with memory impairment?
- Is the staff respectful of each resident's dignity and privacy?
- Is the staff patient with each resident?
- What are some examples of how the staff members empower each resident to care for themselves?
- How does the staff empower a person to engage in life and activities that are special for that individual?
- How much does the staff know about each person's personal history?

Visit <http://tinyurl.com/3c7cvsv> for the Health & Human Services Housing Rating Guidelines

Senior Community Review Questions

- Will the staff allow me to observe for a day, so that I can see what daily life is like at the site?
- What types of activities are arranged for residents with Alzheimer's / Dementia?
- Are activities and meals customized to meet the preferences of the residents?

If you're seeking residential nursing home care for your loved one, consider these additional questions:

- As you walk through the facility and observe the residents, are they clean, well-groomed, comfortably and appropriately dressed for the season?
- Is the building temperature comfortable?
- Is the building clean, neat, odor-free, and welcoming?
- Are residents offered a variety of choices for meals and snacks?
- Are snacks and drinks available upon request, or only at meal-times?
- Are there scheduled activities and outings available for those who are less independent and mobile?
- May I speak with other residents and their families, in order to get their impressions and insights?
- Is each resident's privacy respected?
- Is each resident's individual identity respected? Does the admissions guide call the residents by name?