

HOUSING & CARE DECISIONS · FREE COMPANION TOOL

14 questions to ask before you sign

A tour is designed to reassure you. Your job is to get past the fresh paint and the nice lobby to how they actually care for someone with dementia — on a Tuesday night, when your mom or dad is frightened and you're not there. Bring this. Write their answers in the margin. The way they answer tells you as much as the answer.

A Staffing & training

1 What is your caregiver-to-resident ratio — days, and overnight?

Nights are when problems happen and staffing thins. Ask for both numbers.

2 What specific dementia training does your staff complete, and how often?

"All our staff are trained" is not an answer. Ask what training, and how many hours.

3 What was your caregiver turnover last year?

High turnover means your parent re-explains themselves to strangers constantly. It matters more than the decor.

4 Who is here at 2 a.m., and what are they allowed to handle?

Find out whether a nurse is on-site or on-call overnight.

B Safety & security

5 How do you prevent and respond to a resident wandering or trying to leave?

Ask them to describe the last time it happened and what they did.

6 How do you handle falls, and how quickly are families told?

You want a real protocol and honest, fast communication — not a note you find later.

7 What happens in a medical emergency?

Which hospital, how they decide to send someone, and how fast you'd hear.

Where Quality of Life Counts

Educational information from Senior Advocators Inc. It is not medical, legal, or financial advice, and it does not create a client relationship. For your family's specific situation, speak with the appropriate licensed professional.

c The daily life

- 8

Walk me through a normal day for a resident like my parent.

Vague answers mean there isn't much of a day. You want specifics, hour by hour.
- 9

What do you do for someone who won't join activities or is having a hard day?

This reveals whether they meet people where they are or just medicate the difficulty.
- 10

How do you learn who they are — their history, their habits, what upsets them?

Good memory care is built on knowing the person, not managing a diagnosis.

D When they change

- 11

As their needs increase, at what point can you no longer keep them?

Know now what would force another move later, so it isn't a crisis.
- 12

Can they stay through the end of life, and do you work with hospice?

Ask whether "aging in place" is real here or a brochure phrase.

E The money & the contract

- 13

What is the true all-in monthly cost, and what triggers an increase?

Base rate plus every care "level" and add-on. Ask what their likely real number is.
- 14

What are the move-out and refund terms if this doesn't work?

Read this clause before you sign, not after. Ask how much notice and what's refundable.

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The who-to-call list to leave with them

The day your parent moves in, the staff will ask who to call — and so will you, at the worst possible moment, if it isn't written down. Fill this in before you sign, hand them a copy, and keep one on your own fridge.

In an emergency — call 911 first, then:

Primary doctor / neurologist: _____ phone _____

Preferred hospital: _____

Key caregivers

Day-to-day point person: _____ phone _____

Backup contact: _____ phone _____

Who can legally make decisions

Healthcare decision-maker (POA): _____ phone _____

Financial power of attorney: _____ phone _____

Good to have on file

Preferred pharmacy: _____

Hospice / palliative team, if any: _____

Not sure they're ready to move at all?

Whether it's time, what level of care they actually need, and how to pay for it are decisions that turn on your parent's stage and your family's finances. **A consultation with Ginell Butler, MAASM, MSA** can help you weigh the move itself before you tour a single building. senioradvocators.org

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