

Senior Living: Evaluating What is Right for *You*

Choosing a senior living community can be overwhelming, especially in a world with so many choices. However, taking the initiative to do your own research may simplify the process and relieve many of your concerns. Referring to the internet, social circles, directories or personal references will be a good start to narrow in on options that seem to meet your needs. Then, pick a handful of your top candidates and visit them in person—perhaps with a friend or family member—so that you have a basis for comparison. Nothing counts more than your own feelings!

During your visits, keep in mind the following questions:

What are the costs?

Is there an entry fee? What is included in the cost and what requires additional fees? Are you required to buy a residence, or is it possible to rent? Weigh the pros and cons of that decision. What is the financial status of the community you are considering and what happens to your investment if that company goes out of business? Have your personal financial advisors give you their opinion before you sign a contract.

What levels of healthcare are offered?

The facility may be able to meet your needs now, but will it meet your needs as your health changes? Is this a CCRC (Continuing Care Retirement Community)? Is memory care offered? Are the nurses registered? If you are in an independent living unit, will healthcare professionals be available to help with medications or other health needs?

Ask your own doctor what he or she knows about the reputation of the community's healthcare services. Is the facility licensed and accredited? Check with the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF).

Is this a place that you would like to live?

Is it clean and welcoming? Are the grounds well maintained? Are the residences or apartments what you expected? How does the staff interact with the residents? Do you feel comfortable with the residents you talk with? Would you want to socialize with these residents?

Other thoughts to consider:

During your visits, notice whether there are enough common areas to encourage socialization. Take a look at the gym, the library and any other amenities. Ask the residents about outings and social gatherings.

- What kind of support staff is there beyond health professionals?
- Is transportation available?
- Is maid service offered?
- Is it possible to bring your own furniture? Or to redecorate your residence?
- Is there a place to park your vehicle? What about parking for guests?

Make more than one visit to the facility you are seriously considering. Some senior living communities will welcome you to have a meal in the dining facility. Besides sampling the food, you will experience the social environment and have a chance to talk with residents. By visiting at different times of the day you will get to meet more of the staff. Outside of office hours, the residents might be more candid.

After all of your questions have been answered, ask yourself: “Can I picture myself living here?”

*If you have any questions about senior living –
Please contact us today!*