



Tour Tips: Finding a Senior Living Community

Whether you are considering an Independent Living, Assisted Living, or Memory Care community for your loved one or yourself, you'll want to make sure it's a great fit.

As the number of older people in our communities continues to increase, it's likely the number of housing options is increasing too. That makes it harder to choose the right community—either for yourself or a loved one. The most important thing you can do is explore the possibilities together.

Asking the right questions and keeping an eye out for some common indicators of quality should give you more insight into what you'll find in any given senior living community.

What is the quality of life here?

When you visit a possible new residence, whether Independent Living, Assisted Living or Memory Care, you'll likely find that current residents are your best resource. Don't be afraid to ask them how they like living in their community! Participate in an activity and note how many people attend and

whether they are engaged in the activity. Ask for an activity calendar that you and your loved one can review to find matching or new interests.

Are the community surroundings clean and inviting?

If anything you see or smell concerns you, be sure to ask your guide about it. You want to be sure you are in an environment where you are confident about the sanitation—and completely comfortable with living there!

Take a look at the outdoor spaces as well as the indoor ones. Are there walking paths and gardens? Are there opportunities for residents to enjoy gardening? What about benches and other resting places if residents get tired? If security is a concern, ask about gates, monitoring policies and how resident safety is addressed.

Keeping in mind that there will be differences in the styles, safety features and accommodations for Assisted Living or Memory Care, research and bring along a list of elements that you and your loved one are most interested in—make sure those features are available.



What kind of care does the community provide? How will you and your loved one's needs be met?

Because everyone's needed level of care is different, it's important to let staff know exactly what you are looking for. Make sure you familiarize yourself with the specifics offered in assisted living, independent living, rehabilitation and memory care. Ask about assistance with the daily tasks of living, including assistance with medications, bathing, dressing and attending meals or events around the building.

You'll also want to see if residents with mobility issues are able to get around easily. Pay careful attention to the resident experience in memory care settings. Are residents in memory care encouraged to be as independent as they possibly can be? Do the activities offered engage them? What opportunities are there for outings or community involvement?

Are the staff kind and caring?

The importance of staff members to the senior living experience cannot be overstated. Ask residents how they feel about staff and ask management about the ratio of staff to residents. If residents feel warmly about staff members, they will likely give you an enthusiastic response. You should also take the time to observe staff and resident interactions throughout your visit.

What is the dining experience like?

Mealtime is central to the quality of life offered at every care community. Are there accommodations for dietary restrictions? Are the food choices fresh, healthy and tasty? What is service like in the dining room? Are there choices for variations on the daily dining experience? Would you want to eat there again?

While choosing the right community may take some time, asking the right questions can bring you a lot closer to finding what you want. Don't be afraid to return to a community and tour it again before selecting it. Pay attention to your instincts, as well—as many times, you will “know” if a community feels like the right one. The answers you receive will confirm those feelings.

About Cassia

In 2018, Augustana Care and Elim Care came together to form Cassia. We are a faith-based, nonprofit organization with over 200 combined years of experience providing housing, health care and community services to older adults and those in need. In addition to several Minnesota locations, Cassia offers communities and services in Colorado, Florida, Iowa, and North Dakota. Residents in Cassia communities can find skilled nursing, assisted and independent living, memory care, adult day services and rehabilitation.



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