

# RALEIGH GERIATRIC CARE MANAGEMENT



## What to look for in a Memory Care Facility

Visiting communities or homes that offer Alzheimer's and **dementia care** is an invaluable part of identifying the best option for a loved one suffering from the disease. Whereas choosing an independent living or assisted living community often involves the availability of services and amenities, selecting memory care should be primarily influenced by confidence in the quality of care and interaction seen during tours. The following checklist will help guide you through each tour and, afterward, allow you to compare the various options available in an organized manner.

Name of Facility: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Visit: \_\_\_\_\_

### The Atmosphere - What to Look For:

1. Is the layout of the community easy to navigate? Do the hallways lead residents back to public areas? Are colors or murals used to help residents recognize their hallway or living area they're trying to reach?
2. Do the residents have adequate privacy for bathing, toileting and hygiene? This is an important aspect of maintaining residents' dignity while acknowledging that personal space and boundaries may be compromised due to the frequency of wandering and loss of inhibitions.
3. Does the furniture appear well-maintained with special upholstery used to prevent stains from spills and/or incontinence issues?
4. Are all exterior doors locked or alarmed to ensure the safety of residents who are wandering?
5. Is there an outdoor patio and/or walking area that is easily accessible to residents yet enclosed to prevent wandering away from the community?

### The Care Team - Questions to Ask & What to Look For:

1. What type of licensure is required for key members of the care team? Is the Director a licensed nurse and how many hours is the community staffed with a licensed nurse (RN or LPN)?
2. Do the caregivers have specialized training in effectively communicating with and caring for residents who suffer from Alzheimer's or dementia? Have they been screened with state/national background checks?
3. Are staff members dressed professionally and/or wearing appropriate uniforms and name tags that distinguish them from visitors?
4. Do the caregivers interact with residents in a comforting and professional manner, maintaining their dignity and respect?

### The Residents - What to Look For:

1. Are residents actively engaged in activities that are appropriate and/or interesting to those with Alzheimer's or dementia? Are there opportunities for residents to contribute to the community (as appropriate), such as folding napkins, towels or clothing?
2. Pay particular attention to the hygiene of the residents: combed/brushed hair, clean-shaven, matching, clean clothing, free of incontinence odors.
3. Do the residents appear to have a level of dementia that is consistent with your loved one's current needs and behaviors? In many cases, communities specialize in a certain acuity level that may not be appropriate at the particular time you're exploring options. Residents who cannot relate to and interact well with other residents may suffer from isolation and depression.

### Additional Considerations:

1. Is the location of the community convenient to family members and friends to encourage regular visits?
2. Do you have a good rapport with the management and care team, feel comfortable in their abilities and trust them to provide for your loved one's needs?
3. Can the community's rates be afforded for the foreseeable future? Changes in lifestyle often lead to further decline among seniors with Alzheimer's or dementia so it is important to select a community that they can live in as long as possible.

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