

10 Crucial Questions Every Senior Living Community Should Be Able to Answer



With an ever-growing number of options, transitioning to a senior living community or retirement home can be overwhelming. Here are some crucial questions to ask on your next community tour. Their answers will help create the best transition and one that will last!

QUESTION 1

What makes your community stand out from the rest of the communities in this area?

If the answer is “our care,” ask for specifics. It is important to understand the level of care. Excellent care is expected of a healthcare community. When discussing levels of care, be sure they site examples. This helps all to understand and manage care expectations in the future. Not all senior living communities are equal.

QUESTION 2

Does the community have a management company?

If so, where is it located? How often do representatives from the management company visit the community? Having an involved property management company is critical to the health of the community, the caring staff members, and the maintenance of the building.

QUESTION 3

Who owns the community?

This is a crucial question if not the most important. It is important to know that the owners are invested in its community.

QUESTION 4

Do you have a Registered Nurse or a Licensed Professional Nurse overseeing the healthcare program in memory care and in assisted living?

While Assisted Living communities do not require that an RN or LPN be in the building overnight or on weekends, they are “on call” for any needs that the residents may have. If so, what hours is she/he at the community?

QUESTION 5

Are members of the management team at the community on the weekend?

You should be able to access a member of the management team every day of the week. The management team should be aware of what is happening during the weekend in any retirement community.

QUESTION 6

Can you provide a copy of the latest state survey? (For Assisted Living community only)

The State Health Department survey should be readily available for assisted living and higher-level care service communities. This survey provides deficiencies the state survey team found and what steps the community is taking to correct them.

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Now that you are confident with the foundational questions, let's talk about the everyday. Is this a community that is everything you imagined and more? Virginia Woolf once said, "One cannot think well, love well, sleep well, if one has not dined well." So, let's begin this next set of questions with dining.

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QUESTION 7

Who plans the menus? How are they planned? How often are they changed: monthly, quarterly, or by season? Are the residents encouraged to make suggestions for the menu?

If residents have menu input, ask for a specific example. Be sure to get a copy of at least one monthly menu if it is available. If possible, schedule a lunch and tour so you can see for yourself! Ask if there are fees associated that would increase the cost of assisted living and what are the options if your loved one has a fixed income housing budget.

QUESTION 8

How are the activities planned? Do the resident's likes and suggestions factor into the activities calendar? Are the activities meeting the resident's physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual needs?

Whether you are seeking memory care, assisted living, or independent living for the active adults, ask for a copy of the latest calendar of activities and a newsletter if they have one. If a community has a way to communicate these activities to you then BONUS POINTS!

QUESTION 9

Who is the current Executive/Community Director?

Meeting the Executive Director and asking questions about why he/she chose this industry is important. This is the person who sets the standard for the rest of the community employment and ensures the most positive environment.

QUESTION 10

Most importantly: Talk to some of the residents!

This is their community. See what they have to say. They can give you valuable insight and potentially be a new friend and neighbor. If you don't feel comfortable doing so, ask for

stories and examples that the current residents have shared with the management team about how living in this community has improved their lives.

Depending on the level of care you or your loved one needs, we encourage you to ask specific questions especially when it comes to dementia care, Alzheimer's care, and what level community is right for you. Depending on the level of memory loss, residential care levels vary. Most long term care insurance pays for the care aspect NOT the housing. However, when adding up the living cost to live at home versus a senior living community, especially for a person with Alzheimer's or dementia, paying for assisted living and memory care can be a fixed and affordable solution.

Remember assisted living and memory care is not a nursing home or long-term care facility. It is a supportive environment for individuals who are looking for the care in carefree retirement living.

In any situation, trust your intuition.

To practice asking these crucial questions, reach out to one of our communities. They will be happy to answer them. You may even find the place you have dreamed of in return!