



ANTHEM

MEMORY CARE

Empowering Your Decision: Guide to Touring a Memory Care Community



*Your Family.
Our Privilege.*





We understand that touring a memory care community can be overwhelming, so we have put together this guide to help you prepare for your visit. Our goal is to make this experience as informative and comfortable as possible, ensuring that you have all the information you need to make the best decision possible for your loved one's care.

While there will always be a few unknowns with any decision, you can eliminate many of them through research, collaboration with family, and planning.

We suggest you focus on these key areas:

- Start by conducting your own research whenever possible. Each family is unique, which is why organic research is often more tailored to your specific needs compared to relying solely on agents or third parties who may have their own agendas.
- Involve family members in the conversation early, even if it's challenging to gain full agreement. Collaborating now will simplify decisions later. If full family participation isn't possible, trust that you are making the best decision for your loved one. Remember, dementia is a disease, and memory care plays a crucial role in their treatment plan.
- Engaging in an open discussion with your loved one about their preferences can be helpful if they are in the early stages of their dementia journey. Understanding their thoughts and wishes can provide valuable insight as you evaluate communities together. For those further along in their journey, they may be unable to participate in or fully comprehend the decision to move. As a caregiver, you will ultimately need to determine the right timing for this transition, ensuring it aligns with their well-being and care needs.
- Narrow down your options to 2-3 prospective communities. This is to maintain a sense of choice without feeling overwhelmed. If you are having your loved one tour the community, limit the tours to the top choice.

Create a list of insightful questions:

Gather questions that will enrich your tour experience. Our list is curated from expert advice and reputable sources. (National Council on Aging, National Institute on Aging, AARP, Where You Live Matters, Alzheimer's Foundation of America, The Alzheimer's Association, Alzheimers.Net).

- Is the community regulated? Regulations differ state-by-state so check online to identify those which meet or exceed the requirements.
- What are the credentials and experience of staff members? Prioritize licensed professionals who are given ongoing training in dementia care.
- Are they efficiently staffed? The ratio of caregiver-to-resident may be slightly different depending on the size of the community and level of care needed for your loved one.



- How often are room check-ins conducted, and how? This is important, especially at night, to make sure residents are secure in their rooms. Ask how quickly staff respond to a resident who needs help.
- Is a registered nurse and/or another medical team member on site 24/7? Confirm access to healthcare professionals in emergencies.
- Is family involvement encouraged? This is especially important in memory care settings.
- What safety features do they have? Are indoor and outdoor areas properly secured? Are there heat controls on faucets in bathrooms?
- How are medical and behavioral expressions addressed? This might include diabetes and other medical conditions as well as behavioral expressions.
- What is the extent of care the community can provide? Why may your loved one have to move out?

Take your time with the tour. Walk the grounds. Look for areas where your loved one can sit and enjoy various spaces, including the outdoors.

Other important considerations.

Consider dropping in for an unscheduled visit. Most memory care communities will welcome an impromptu visit as long as it respects residents' schedules. A drop-in visit later in the evening, for example, can be disruptive. However, it may be a red flag if a community only conducts tours at specific times on specific days. Visiting at a random time will give you a look into a typical day. (National Council on Aging).

Be sure to consider your loved one as well as other family members and their opinions. If you know others who have gone through this process, reach out to them. They will have insights you may not have thought of.

Trust your instincts. If you notice something that doesn't feel right during your tour, voice your concern with whomever is conducting the tour. They are there to help and may be able to resolve any issues. But if not, don't give up. You want to choose what is best for you and your loved one and ultimately you should be prepared to walk away.



The time to start preparing is now.

Often families will postpone evaluating memory care communities due to lack of time or the challenge of making a difficult decision for an aging parent. The ideal time to bring up the subject is well before the need arises.

When the need is urgent, however, it is important to resist the urge to accept an arrangement that doesn't feel right. Work with family members and trusted friends to help take on some of the tasks to give you more time and space to consider all the options. This will help ensure that you and your family make the most informed and thoughtful decision for your loved one.