

HOW TO CHOOSE AN ASSISTED LIVING COMMUNITY

12250 Weber Hill Road | St. Louis, MO 63127 | 314-729-3500 | AscensionLiving.org

Assisted living is a good choice for older adults who need a little help with everyday tasks, but want to maintain as much independence as possible. Assisted living is usually about two-thirds the cost of skilled care and must be paid out-of-pocket, with a few states providing Medicaid waivers for assisted living services.

Be sure to ask about billing, residential accommodations, refunds and payments. Take into account your personal resources, and the amount of time you or your loved one may be in the assisted living community.

CareConversations.org identifies 4 criteria for choosing an assisted living community:

- Does it have low staff turnover?
- Does it avoid unnecessary hospital stays and readmissions?
- What strategies, besides medications, does it use to respond to challenging behaviors?
- Are residents and their families happy and satisfied?

Look for a place that focuses on person-centric care, also known as individualized or resident-centered care. This approach gives you options to customize your own care and daily routine according to your preferences.

QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT ASSISTED LIVING

ATMOSPHERE

- As you enter, is the lobby pleasing, the décor homelike?
- Does the administrator/staff greet the residents by name?
- Do the residents interact with each other and seem happy?
- Are the common areas and residences free of odors and clean in appearance?

SAFETY

- Is the community designed for the residents' needs?
- Are doorways and hallways wide enough for wheelchairs?
- Are elevators easily accessible for those who can't use stairs?
- Are handrails available to aid walking?
- Are cupboards and shelves easy to reach?
- Are the floors of a non-skid material?
- Are the carpets firm to aid walking?
- Is there a fire sprinkler system?
- Are exits clearly marked?

LEVEL OF CARE

- Is staff available to meet scheduled and unscheduled needs?
- Is staff available 24/7 for assistance with daily activities?
- What medical services are provided?

FINANCES

- Is the contractual agreement available?
- Is there a written care plan for each resident?
- Under what circumstances can the contract be terminated?
- Are there additional services available if a resident's needs change?
- Are there different costs for varying levels of services?
- Do the billing, payment and credit policies seem reasonable?

RESOURCES:

[4 Criteria to Consider When Choosing an Assisted Living Community](http://CareConversations.org) and [What Is Person-Centered Care Anyway?](http://CareConversations.org) CareConversations.org (an initiative of the American Health Care Association, the National Center for Assisted Living (NCAL), and America's Skilled Nursing Caregivers)

LINKS:

careconversations.org/stories/2015/08/06/4-criteria-consider-when-choosing-assisted-living-community

careconversations.org/stories/2014/11/03/what-person-centered-care-anyway

Choosing an Assisted Living Residence: A Consumer's Guide, by the American Health Care Association (guide will download after clicking link) ahcancal.org/ncal/about/assistedliving/Documents/Choosing_An_Assisted_Living_Residence.doc