



living your choice™

Questions You Should Be Ready To Ask

Whether you're just doing research for a future move or have an immediate need, the transition to a senior living community can be daunting and stressful. The questions that follow will help you consider what's important to you and your family, so you can determine the senior living environment that fits you best. After all, it's your choice!

The phrase "aging gracefully" can mean many things, but what it doesn't usually include is the possibility of an alternative living situation. Unfortunately, most families and seniors don't consider alternative living arrangements until they have to—when it becomes too difficult for the elderly family member to carry on the essential activities of daily life without the help and support from others.

Challenges of Aging

Challenges faced by the elderly can include loss of vision, poor balance, memory loss, forgetfulness, fatigue, or dementia. In some cases the decision to move to a senior-living environment may be recommended by a physician.

A major factor for many seniors, which is often overlooked, is the need for socialization. As we age, the loss of social and supportive networks can lead to isolation, which can quickly affect our well-being. Our common need for socialization plays a significant role in continuing to lead a healthy, fulfilling life.

Senior living communities provide many opportunities to lead a healthy lifestyle, with the support of on-site care and a renewed social network.

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1. What Are Important Considerations for YOU?

Before searching for senior living options, ask yourself a few key questions:

- 👁️ What do I know about the different senior living options?
- 👁️ What's the best way to get accurate, objective information?
- 👁️ What would a successful outcome look like a year after move-in?
- 👁️ Can I afford to live at the community, both now and in the future?
- 👁️ Can I make the important distinction between price and value?
- 👁️ What services will I need in a senior living community?

You may find that senior living communities offer more options than you expected. But you're not alone! Most seniors and their families are in the same boat — doing their research before making a decision. We encourage you to do your own research and want you to know that we're also here to help, every step of the way.

2. Four Important Questions to Ask and Understand:

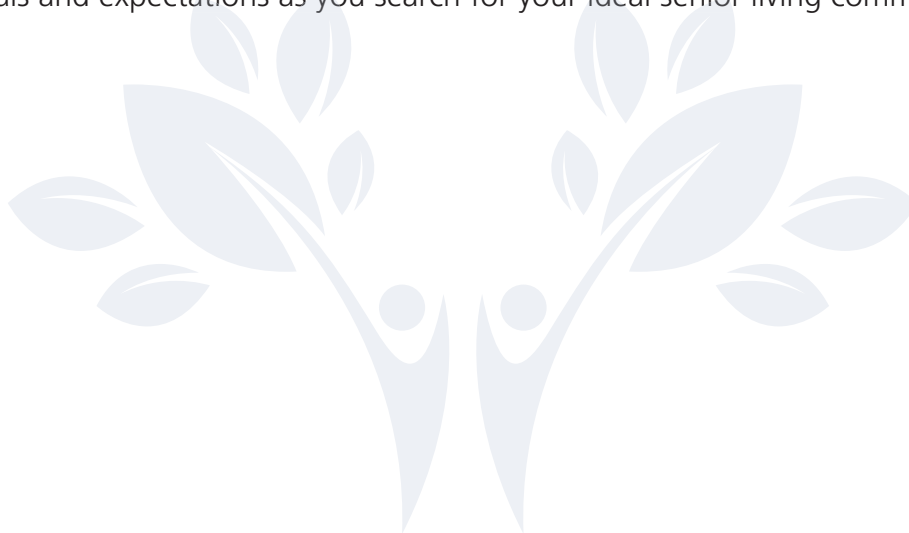
- 👁️ What is the quality of life I desire?
- 👁️ What is the level and standard of care I need?
- 👁️ What is the overall cost and value?
- 👁️ Is this the type of community that suits my lifestyle?

3. Seeking the Quality of Life You Desire

It can be difficult to define the quality of life as we age and how it might be fulfilled in a senior living environment. Seniors and their families who have successfully made the transition frequently mention these considerations:

- Comfort and peace of mind
- Affordability and financial security
- Quality and value
- High standards of care
- Optimized independence
- Socialization
- Experience/adventures/nostalgia
- Individual recognition
- Intellectual stimulation
- Self-expression and fulfillment

Set your own goals and expectations as you search for your ideal senior living community.



4. Prioritize Your High Standards of Care

When touring a community in which medical care is required, pay particular attention to clinical procedures and technological innovations that are used daily in the community. Confirm that staffing levels are consistent with personal standards. Family members should get answers to the following questions:

- ☞ How will you respond if my "mom" has a medical emergency?
- ☞ How will you continuously monitor Mom's condition without an unusual invasion of privacy?
- ☞ How will you monitor and deal with the possibility that my mom's condition may change?
- ☞ Describe how you staff the community 24/7 to provide the kind of care my mom requires?
- ☞ On average, how many minutes per day does a resident like my mom receive direct, hands-on assistance?
- ☞ What kind of social interaction will there be for residents on a daily basis?

5. Price vs. Value – Buying Peace of Mind

Throughout your life, you've probably been conservative when making most of your major purchase decisions. If senior living is the right fit, this could be one of the most important decisions you ever make.

Should you seek the lowest price or decide on a comfortable, high-value community? There are options on both ends of the spectrum and many in between. It's always important to weigh both affordable value and optimum life satisfaction.

Senior living is a value-enhanced and service-enriched environment. Therefore, it may seem expensive at first glance. However, considering the variety of options available, you may soon discover that the true cost of senior living is more affordable than your initial impression.

5. Price vs. Value - You are Buying Peace of Mind (Cont.)

The first important step is to understand one's true current cost of living. For example, consider a few expenses, such as:

- Utility bills
- Home maintenance
- Groceries
- Real estate taxes
- Gardening expenses
- Transportation
- Insurance
- Housekeeping

Most senior living communities typically include all of these items above and much more. (Please note that most contract agreements are month-to-month.)

Take time to make a list of your current expenses and compare them to senior living options. In the end, you may be surprised to discover that senior living is no more expensive than your current cost of living.

What you value will be the most important consideration, because you are ultimately purchasing peace of mind.

6. Balance First Impressions with Reality

Take seriously the first impressions you get of each community we visit. Just remember to balance those initial impressions with other important factors.

Your first impressions might include the overall neighborhood setting: the landscaping, the campus layout, and the residence's exterior. When you enter the residence, think about your comfort level. Check out the public spaces and remember that they are a shared extension of the private living space.

Keep in mind that you're not trying to replace the total living area of your current home! You're making an informed trade-off: between a relatively large home for a new living environment that offers an extensive array of services designed specifically for seniors.

Be sure to download and print our [Living Your Choice "Checklist"](#). Then bring it with you to take note of all the important attributes of each community we visit. We also recommend sampling a meal and participating in an activity at each of the centers you enjoyed most.

7. Get Detailed and Objective Feedback

To get a balanced perspective about what life would be like in the community you're considering, try talking with the staff as well as residents and their family members.

Ask about their typical day and how the staff is involved. Ask about opportunities for social interaction.

Most importantly, ask current residents and their families these questions:

- 👂 How did you work through the decision-making process?
- 👂 How do you feel about your decision to move in to this community?
- 👂 If you knew then what you know now, would you still move in to this community?

Getting insight from the current residents and their families will help you decide whether this particular community is a good fit for you.

8. Consider the Future But Don't Try To Predict Everything

As we age, all of us experience increasing levels of frailty and other health complications. That's why it's important to understand how each community will adjust to your changing needs. Find out how will they charge you for additional services that may be needed later.

It's also important to understand each community's policies. What if it's determined that the community can no longer care for you or your loved one? How much choice will you have if a change is needed to the level of care?

Ask about what kind of choices and control you will have in these decisions. It may sound like uncomfortable conversation. But knowing the answers will help provide comfort for you and your family in choosing a community that can meet your needs now and in the future.

It's okay to make decisions based on what you need or want now. Not all things are predictable, so make sure you address the reasons why you're currently looking.

9. Use Your Expert Counselor

Each Living Your Choice Counselor is an expert with extensive training in the field of senior living. Our expert Counselors will be able to walk you through the range of options available in your area based on your preferences. Your Counselor is available throughout the process to guide you and help make sure your transition goes as smoothly as possible.



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