

Assisted Living ESSENTIALS

#1. LOCATION: Beach or mountains, city or suburbs. In a colder climate, do they continue to provide services if 14 inches of snow is dropped overnight. How prepared is the community for mother nature?

#2. PRICING: This isn't like buying a car, prices aren't negotiable, amenities and location of your home may be. Do your research, ask the questions. A base/entry price may just be the start of a monthly bill. If the monthly service fees look much lower in comparison to other communities in the area, read the fine print. Does it include dining? How many meals or days does that cover? Is it extra for transportation, utilities included? If you need help on Tuesdays loading all your equipment in the car for glass blowing, ask. A la carte services can really add up.

#3. CONTINUING CARE: Aging isn't an option, planning for it is. What are the long-term options? What does a transition to more care entail? If I have to move to a different level of care does that mean that I have to leave the community, are those services available on-site?

#4. AMENITIES: Dining, Social Events, Wellness/Fitness, housekeeping, laundry, off campus opportunities, groups, special activities.

#5. PERSONALITY: Not just your own, but the communities as well. This is a bit different than simply going over a checklist of amenities. All communities have food, a fitness room or activities area. What the members are actually doing, their happiness and the goal... that's the personality. It starts from the top down. If the community director is doing a half-hearted job of running their community, it's a telltale sign that's how the rest of the staff members are feeling about it as well. It trickles down to everyone. Leading into a tour, ask the guide about the personality of the community and on the tour, does it match up? Do you prefer a library quiet atmosphere or a social center full of energy? Take a few minutes to meet the community director, get a feel for their leadership style and pride they have in their community.

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