

Questions for Memory Care Facilities:

Every person is unique, every person with dementia is unique. Not every facility is going to fit every person. Think about how this individual is doing now. Do they like to walk and be physically active? In this case, you might prefer a larger facility where there is room to roam. If they don't need this and a homey environment fits them better, look for a small adult family home with a smaller, more home-like environment. Ask to see most recent state survey results or check these out on-line.

1. Is the facility bright and open? Are there places to walk in-doors and out?
2. Are there patio areas? Are these areas secure?
3. What are the rooms like? Shared or individual.
4. Do they have bathrooms in the room? If not, how are the bathrooms marked? How are the rooms labeled to help residents find their way?
5. What does the facility offer in terms of activities?
6. Look for interactions between staff and residents. How are they engaging them in routine and planned activities?
7. Activities should be geared to the individual's interests and abilities and should help them to feel good about their abilities.
8. Activities can include routine activities such as wiping the tables, sweeping, setting the table, dusting, folding laundry, etc.
9. There should also be group and individual activities that fit the residents' abilities and likes.
10. Ask the staff about how they communicate and approach residents. What are some of their approaches if someone is upset? These are some of the things they should say...
 - a. We approach from the front.
 - b. We get down on their level.
 - c. We smile and adjust our tone of voice to sooth and re-assure.
 - d. We simplify what we say.
 - e. We adjust our body language to indicate a non-threatening stance.
 - f. We respond to their feelings and then re-assure and re-direct.
 - g. We walk with them.
 - h. We back off and re-approach later.
 - i. We are pro-active and watch for signs of agitation and work to remove the cause of the agitation.
 - j. When providing care, we include them, we encourage them to participate in their own care, we begin with building a connection with the resident.

11. Visit at different times of day. Meal times, morning routine, afternoon and night time... if you can. Recognize that the time from 3-8 can be very active as many folks with dementia have “sundown syndrome”. This is a time that causes many to feel more anxious. See how the staff responds to this. What are their approaches?
12. Ask if there has been a time when they haven’t been able to care for an individual and had to move them out of the facility. What was the reason for this?
13. Do they accept public funding? If you feel they will need that in time.
14. Contact one of our Dementia Care Specialist at the ADRC if you have additional questions related to your loved one’s needs:
 - a. Ellen Taylor 608-240-7472 or Taylor.Ellen@danecounty.gov
 - b. Kayla Olson 608-240-7464 or Olson.Kayla@danecounty.gov