



Little Things Mean a Lot... A Personal Checklist

The checklist below grew out of a daughter's personal search for the best residence for her mother. As the story goes, she began her search by asking all the wrong questions and realizing she did not know the right questions to ask. She found out that choosing a residence is much harder than choosing a university: it would be not easy for an elderly lady to transfer after a semester if the wrong choice was made. We hope that this checklist will help other mothers and daughters make one of the most important decisions of their lives.

First Questions Asked

- How much does the room cost?
- What is the size of the room?
- Where is the bathroom?

At the beginning of her search, the daughter thought these questions were important. As the search progressed, she realized they were not...

Important Questions to Ask

Staffing

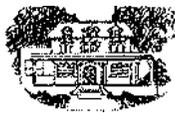
- What is the ratio of the residents to staff? *(We know the disastrous effects of high student/teacher ratios on the quality of education ...)*
- Do kindness and respect govern the interactions of staff and residents?
- Are the residents isolated in their rooms, or do they appreciate the life of the residence with the help of the staff?
- If necessary, will a staff member assist a resident to get to and from the dining room or activities?
- Can you freely phone Management to discuss a concern?
- Are supervised baths available to avoid accidents?
- Does a staff member wish you goodnight and give you a reassuring hug?
- Is there a hairdresser?

Medical Services

- Is there 24 hour a day nursing care?
- Who administers medication?
- Who purchases medication? *(It is imperative that the residence does. A resident should not have to venture out in the ice and snow to renew a prescription...)*
- Is there a doctor available? *(Think of the logistical problems of getting to medical appointments ...)*
- Does a dentist visit the residence regularly?

Fulford Residence
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Medical Services (cont'd)

- Does an audiologist make regular visits?
- Is foot care provided? (*We forget that our feet are our principal means of transportation.*)
- If a resident is ill or has an accident, is she obliged to seek respite elsewhere?

Meals and More

- Are the meals nutritious?
- Are morning coffee and afternoon tea included?
- Is there an evening snack?
- Does Management coordinate tablemates to ensure congeniality?

Activities

- Is there a programme of activities every day?
- Is the programme printed and displayed for easy consultation?
- Is there a recreational therapist to develop and organize activities?
- Is there a core of volunteers to supervise activities and enhance the quality of life in the residence?

Does the residence encourage the learning of new skills like sending emails to grandchildren?

- Are there church services which provide spiritual solace?
- Is there a newsletter to celebrate the activities of the residents?

Housekeeping Services

- Who does the laundry?
- Who takes clothes to the dry cleaner?
- Who cleans the room?
- Who changes the linen?
- Who buys toilet paper and Kleenex?

General Considerations

- Does the residence look and smell fresh and clean?
- Is the location of the residence convenient for the resident and her family?
- Is there free visitor parking?
- Are visitors made to feel welcome?
- Is impartial financial counseling available?
- What is the form of the governance of the residence?

After answering all the "right" questions, the mother and daughter chose Fulford Residence...

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