



What to Look for in an Assisted Living Community for an African-American Senior

If you're searching for an assisted living facility, it's important to find a place where you or your loved one feels safe. The level of care provided is important, but there are several other key things to look for when you're searching for the right community. While any senior can take advantage of this checklist, some items, such as diversity and anti-discrimination policies, are especially important to consider for African-American seniors.

Use the checklist below while touring potential assisted living communities to help you and your family select the best possible option.

First Impressions

- Are staff polite and well-organized when booking your tour?
- Do the interior and exterior of the community appear well-maintained?
- Do residents appear to be happy and social?
- Does there appear to be cultural or racial diversity among the staff and/or residents?

Facilities and Amenities

- Are the rooms spacious and in good repair?
- Are the rooms well-lit?
- Is there a kitchen or kitchenette to prepare meals and store food in individual suites?
- Are the suites fitted with safety features such as grab bars in the shower and emergency response systems?
- Do monthly rates include cable, telephone and internet?

- Are there common areas to socialize and meet peers, such as a den, library, dining room or game room?
- Are there social gatherings, clubs and planned activities? If so, do they appeal to residents' special interests?
- Are pets allowed? If so, are there restrictions?
- Are services such as housekeeping and laundry provided?
- Is transportation provided? How do residents schedule it?

Care

- Does the facility offer on-site nursing or medically supervised care?
- Do doctors and nurses understand unique ailments that more commonly affect African-American seniors?
- Does the community create individualized written care plans for each resident? If so, how often are they reviewed?
- Is medication administration or assistance provided by caregivers or other staff?
- Does the community offer a memory care program for seniors with dementia?
- Are varying levels of care (i.e., assisted living, nursing care) available on-site?
- Are there physical, occupational and/or speech therapists working on-site?

Dining

- Does the facility provide three meals each day?
- Are meals prepared on-site?
- Does the facility offer varied meal options each day?
- Does the culinary team make special accommodations where needed?
- Are meals served at predetermined times, or can residents dine as they please?
- Are snacks and beverages available throughout the day?

Staff, Licensing and Policies

- Are caregivers certified in First Aid and CPR?
- What training is provided to caregivers and other staff?
- Do all employees undergo background checks?
- What is the staff-to-resident ratio?
- Is the facility licensed by the state?
- Who owns the community?
- Does the facility have clearly posted anti-discrimination policies?
- Does the community accept Medicaid, Medicare or other types of insurance?
- What happens if a resident is late in paying or runs out of insurance coverage?