

COMMUNITY TOUR CHECKLIST

Tour smarter, not longer.

Eight sections, forty-eight things to check. Fill one out on every tour, then lay them side by side. The first five minutes and the last section matter most.

1. Print one per tour

Take it in with you. Handwritten notes on the day beat memory a week later.

2. Tick as you go

Ask the questions out loud. A community that answers plainly is telling you something.

3. Compare, then decide

Use the scorecard on the last page. Then visit your favourite a second time, unannounced.

COMMUNITY

DATE OF VISIT

WHO TOURED

OVERALL FEELING, 1 TO 10

01 First Impressions

The first five minutes of a tour tell you more than an hour of scripted sales talk.

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Exterior grounds are tidy and well-maintained
Gardens, parking lot, entryways | ☐ Entryway is welcoming and easy to navigate
Clear signage, ADA-accessible |
| ☐ Lobby feels bright and friendly
Natural light, comfortable seating, activity | ☐ Staff greeted us warmly by name
Not just the sales person |
| ☐ Residents visible and appear engaged
Not all parked in front of a TV | ☐ Smell is neutral or pleasant
Avoid heavy air freshener, it often masks odors |

NOTES

02 Staff & Care Quality

The quality of a community comes down to the people who show up every day.

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|--|---|
| ☐ Staff-to-resident ratio meets state minimums
Ask for day AND night ratios | ☐ Director of nursing is available to meet
Not just sales staff |
| ☐ Annual staff turnover is under 40%
Low turnover = better care continuity | ☐ Caregivers receive dementia-specific training
Especially if memory care is on site |
| ☐ Clear care assessment process explained
How care levels are priced and re-evaluated | ☐ Staff we met felt genuine and unrushed
Trust your gut |

NOTES

03

Resident Life & Activities

An active, engaged calendar is a lagging indicator of quality care.

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|---|--|
| ☐ Activity calendar has 4+ events per day
Ask to see this week's actual calendar | ☐ Activities include variety of abilities
Not just bingo and TV |
| ☐ Outings and community trips scheduled
Shopping, cultural, religious | ☐ Common areas feel lived-in, not staged
Books, crafts, people using them |
| ☐ Residents we saw looked groomed and comfortable
A quiet sign of attentive care | ☐ Family can visit anytime without pre-approval
Open-door policy |

NOTES

04

Dining & Nutrition

Visit at meal time. Eat a meal if you can.

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| ☐ Multiple menu options each meal
Not a single plate-of-the-day | ☐ Accommodates special diets (diabetic, low-sodium)
Ask to see a sample diet plan |
| ☐ Dining room is quiet enough for conversation
Good acoustics matter a lot | ☐ Food looks fresh and appetizing
If you wouldn't eat it, neither will they |
| ☐ Snacks and beverages available throughout the day
Hydration stations, between-meal access | ☐ Residents are encouraged to socialize at meals
Assigned seats or open tables |

NOTES

05

Safety & Security

Peace of mind is worth a lot. Look for it actively.

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|---|--|
| ☐ Pull cords or pendant alarms in every room
Bathroom, bedroom, living area | ☐ Clear evacuation plan posted and explained
Fire, medical, weather |
| ☐ Secured entries for memory care
Locked units, visitor logs | ☐ Licensed nurse on site 24/7 or on-call
Get specifics: day, evening, overnight |
| ☐ Medication management protocol is documented
Who gives meds, when, how tracked | ☐ Staff background checks are standard
Ask directly about hiring |

NOTES

06

The Apartment

Comfortable, functional, personal. These are non-negotiable.

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|--|--|
| ☐ Apartment size feels comfortable
Not just "efficient" | ☐ Bathroom is accessible with grab bars
Walk-in shower, raised toilet |
| ☐ Residents can bring personal furniture
Home feels like home | ☐ Natural light and operable windows
Mental health matters |
| ☐ Kitchenette or small fridge if desired
Autonomy around food | ☐ Pet policy matches your needs
Types, sizes, fees |

NOTES

07

Contract & Financial

Read the contract twice. Take it home before signing.

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Clear itemization of base rent vs care fees
No mystery charges | ☐ Annual fee increase is capped or predictable
Protect from surprise hikes |
| ☐ Refund policy for move-out is in writing
Notice period, deposit return | ☐ Care-level change triggers are defined
What changes the cost and why |
| ☐ Move-out policy if care needs exceed what's offered
Who decides and on what grounds | ☐ Accepts long-term care insurance, VA benefits
If you plan to use them |

NOTES

08

Trust Your Gut

After the tour, sit in the parking lot for five minutes and check in with yourself.

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Could I see my loved one thriving here? | ☐ Did staff feel genuinely caring, or rehearsed? |
| ☐ Would I be comfortable here myself someday? | ☐ Are my questions being answered, not dodged? |
| ☐ Do I want to come back for a second visit?
The best signal of all | ☐ What's the one thing that would make me say no?
Name it, check it |

NOTES, AND THE ONE THING THAT WOULD MAKE ME SAY NO

Side-by-side scorecard

After each tour, give every section a score out of 10. Add them up, but read the last row twice: a high total with a low “Trust your gut” score is a community to visit again before deciding.

SECTION	COMMUNITY A	COMMUNITY B	COMMUNITY C
01 First Impressions			
02 Staff & Care Quality			
03 Resident Life & Activities			
04 Dining & Nutrition			
05 Safety & Security			
06 The Apartment			
07 Contract & Financial			
08 Trust Your Gut			
Total out of 80			

Find your next tour on SeniorsPlaces

Every community with its starting price, care types and reviews. Communities pay nothing when you contact them, so the answers are about your family, not a referral fee.

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