

Memory Care Script:
Draft 1
July 12, 2008

Speaker:

Hello, thank you so much for contacting A Place for Mom. We want to be your resource when researching the maze of senior housing options. We have Eldercare Advisors throughout the country who are ready and willing to help you.

What is a Memory Care Community?

You may or may not have heard the term memory care. Memory Care is specialized assisted living care for residents with different types of memory loss. These communities offer a safe, secure and therapeutic setting for residents who have memory impairments while providing the support they need for their activities of daily living. These activities may include; medication reminders, meals, bathing assistance, incontinence care and other daily functions of the senior.

Most residents who live in memory care communities have been diagnosed or have symptoms of some form of dementia, for example, Alzheimer's disease or stroke related dementia.

History – when did it start:

Memory Care Communities are most commonly licensed under Assisted Living or Personal Care Homes by the state in which they operate. Dedicated Memory Care communities became more popular in the late 1990's. Currently there are over 700 properties providing memory care services to 35,000 seniors nationwide.

What are the types of atmosphere the care can be provided in?

Some communities may only offer memory care services, while others will provide a combination of memory care and assisted living or nursing services in the same community. Typically memory care residents will live in a dedicated part of the community designed just for their needs. This could be a neighborhood or wing designed to meet their needs and safety.

Memory Care communities can be found in a variety of locations from urban to suburban settings. Communities may offer a range of apartment or suite sizes from shared apartments to one bedrooms. Restrooms and bathing facilities may be private or shared depending on the community.

Many memory care communities have focused on shared or semi-private living situations for residents. Residents are often comforted by having someone else in the room with them.

Who operates these communities?

Memory care communities may be owned or managed by publicly traded corporations, small companies, churches, families or individuals. Some entities will have hundreds of communities while others may just manage one community.

What types of care can be provided

Several different types of services may be offered in Memory Care. This may vary due to company philosophy, specialize training or state licensure. Typically you'll find the communities offer;

Assistance with Activities of Daily Living which includes eating meals, taking medications, using the restroom or toileting, bathing and grooming, getting dressed and physically getting to meals and activities. The senior will be offered reminders, re-directing or will be offered hands- on assistance provided by a staff member. All care is focused on helping the residents maintain as much independence as possible in a safe, structured environment that provides appropriate stimulation and support, specific to memory loss.

Each community may be unique to the degree in which services are provided because of the licensed staff. Registered Nurses, Licensed Practical Nurses and Certified Nursing Assistants are common in most communities; however the number of hours available to residents and support staff will be unique. Some communities may provide more clinical services while others will choose to focus on social programs appropriate for the cognitive level of individuals. The greatest differences between services are usually found in their incontinence and medication programs, including diabetic injections and in the physical lifting or moving of residents who need assistance transferring from a bed to a wheelchair.

Respite or short term stays may also be available. Respite can provide relief for caregivers from the stress of having to provide constant care and or oversight of their loved one.

What are items are typically included in the monthly rent?

- Safety Checks
- 24-hour staff
- All meals & snacks
- Weekly Housekeeping
- Transportation
- Activity Programs
- Most utilities
- Care Charges may or may not be included - if care is extra it will be defined on an individual basis – and can change depending on the residents needs

Meals:

Of course food is important; typically all meals provided include a choice or choices for residents. Meals in memory care communities may cater to residents who may have difficulties sitting at a table for a full meal. These maybe termed Foods on the Go or Portable Foods, but they're easy to carry finger foods that provide nutritious meals and snacks to the resident throughout the day.

Activities:

Activities will focus on resident's ability and interest socially, mentally, physically and spiritually. The activity staff will be instrumental in gaining resident participation and engaging them in activities. Most staff is trained to maximize the resident's abilities, giving them a sense of accomplishment and self-worth. Activities can also be resident directed, focusing on life skills that will be familiar to many of the residents with memory loss such as parenting, gardening, cooking, and exercising.

Community Features:

Features of memory care communities often include outside areas enclosed within a courtyard or garden. Having free access to these areas can help lessen feelings of confinement and provide more independence.

Safety features such as doors with alarms can help to ensure residents are safe.

Most memory care focuses on various features to help residents maintain as much dignity and independence as possible while still providing them cues or guides. Some examples of these might include; specialized light fixture, low stimulus areas where a room is designed with calming features, wall art for touching. The use of color or construction design can help residents to identify different living areas around the community. The use of memory boxes at resident doors can assist them in indentifying their apartment or suite. The overall design is often simple and easy to navigate.

General

Many communities will offer support groups through the Alzheimer's Association or other groups and may even have an affiliation with a local university or research center.

You may want to review the state survey? Because each community is licensed by the state in which it operates, and each state has different regulations. As a consumer you may ask to see the most recent survey.

Your Eldercare Advisor can also provide you with a "Tips on Touring" handout guiding you with questions to ask and suggestions on what to look for or consider when find a great match.

Here at A Place for Mom we hope this information has been helpful in guiding you through a senior housing option you might not have been familiar with. Please contact your Eldercare Advisor or A Place for Mom at _____ if you have any additional questions.

Best wishes to you and family.