

# TOUR CHECKLIST

When you're looking for the perfect community, we welcome you to visit ours and discover the Dodge Park Rest Home Difference. We are honored to be recognized year after year, locally and nationally, for the way we care about our residents and our team.

## We're Setting the Standard in Senior Care

### 2017

Caring Super Star Award Caring.Com

#1 in Rest Home and Memory Care (only 1 in MA, 1 of 67 in the US)

CERNER Caretracker Accredited Organization

### 2016

Caring Super Star Award Caring.Com

#1 in Rest Home and Memory Care (only 1 in MA, 1 of 67 in the US)

American Health Association Member

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### 2015

Caring Super Star Award Caring.Com

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### 2014

Caring Star Award Caring.Com #1 in Rest Home and Memory Care

Landmark Reader's Choice Best Retirement Living Residence

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### 2013

Caring Star Award Caring.Com #1 in Rest Home and Memory Care

Certificate of Appreciation Friends of Worcester's Senior Center

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### 2012

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Healing Heart Hero

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**DODGE PARK**

*Rest Home and Day Club*

101 Randolph Rd, Worcester, MA 508.853.8180

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*And see why we're #1 on Caring.com  
in Massachusetts 5 years in a row.*

# TOUR CHECKLIST

This checklist can serve as a useful tool when investigating and evaluating rest home, memory care or assisted living facilities. The checklist is divided into two sections: Quality Considerations and Practical Considerations.

Although the quality considerations are crucial, they need to be balanced by practical considerations. Sometimes the best home might be a little further than you had hoped to drive. But if this facility provides the best possible care for your loved one, it will be worth a visit. Depending on the person's needs and preferences, some questions can be more important than others.

## Keep in mind the following general tips:

- Start the process early, before there is a crisis.
- Involve the prospective resident as much as possible in the process, if this is possible and practical.
- Use the checklist to get an overall impression of the facility and its practices.
- Pay special attention to how residents are being treated by staff and the quality and responsiveness of the services.
- Don't be sold only on the attractiveness of the facility. The care provided is the vital element of the placement.
- Narrow the options down to two or three facilities.
- Visit each facility several times. Show up without notice.
- When you visit, walk through the entire facility and visit at different times of the day.
- Drop by unannounced and visit at night and/or on the weekend.
- Make sure you visit during a mealtime.
- Obtain a copy of the admission agreement. Read it carefully. Understand the services, costs and conditions for transfer. Always look for the availability of all-inclusive care. Knowing the monthly cost of care in advance allows for best financial planning practices.
- Before you make a final decision, check the latest annual survey report and any citations issued by the state licensing agency. Facilities should make these reports available to you upon request. Talk with current residents and, if possible, their family members.

Take this checklist with you during each facility visit. It will help you look for the right things and ask the right questions. You will stay organized with your notes in one place and be able to compare facilities easily.

## NOTES

FACILITY NAME \_\_\_\_\_

CONTACT PERSON \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

# TOUR CHECKLIST

## Quality Considerations

### Quality of Care and Service

- Do residents appear well cared for?
- Are residents up, clean and dressed by 8:30 AM?
- Are the residents well groomed, e.g., shaved, clean clothes, nails trimmed and hair done?
- Is there a written plan of care for each resident? How often is the care plan reviewed and changed? By whom?
- Does the facility offer programs and/or services that meet your particular care needs, e.g., dementia?
- What is the system for distribution of medications? Does the facility's licensing permit include dispensing of medications? Or does it only permit the facility to remind the resident to take his or her medications? Who actually dispenses meds? What is their level of training?
- Are a medical director and/or physician(s) on premises?
- Is a mental health director (physician) available?
- Does the facility provide transportation to medical services? Does it charge for this kind of transportation?
- Are there clear procedures for responding to medical emergencies?

### Quality of Food

- Does the food look and smell appealing? Are fresh ingredients used?
- Do residents seem to be enjoying the food?
- Does the facility offer two main meals – lunch and dinner – or is dinner a smaller meal? Unfortunately, many facilities provide only sandwiches for dinner.
- Are residents receiving needed dining assistance?
- Are meals served at appropriate temperatures?
- Do menus offer daily choices? How often are menus changed? Ask to see a copy of the week's menu.
- Can the facility meet special dietary needs and ethnic preferences?
- Are nutritious snacks available?
- Is fresh drinking water readily available?
- Is a staff dietitian available to review residents' dietary needs and provide recommendations?
- Does the facility make provisions to serve residents in rooms when needed? Extra cost?

### Quality of Social Interaction

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- Are residents interacting with staff and/or each other?
- Are residents occupied in meaningful activities?
- Does the facility have a planned activities program? Are activity calendars posted? What activities are provided on weekends?
- Is there a designated staff member who coordinates activities? Are activities individualized or only conducted in large groups?
- Do volunteers and outside groups regularly visit the facility?
- Are there planned trips outside the facility?
- Is transportation provided for shopping and personal errands? Extra fees?
- Are pets permitted? Does the facility have its own pets?
- Are residents encouraged to bring in some of their own furnishings?
- Are religious services offered at the facility?

## Quality of Participation

- Are residents and family members involved in assessment and care planning?
- Do residents have an opportunity to provide input into menu and activity planning?
- Are there procedures for responding to requests for information and complaints?
- Is the Ombudsman Program's poster and telephone number posted?
- Does the facility have a residents' council? Does the facility have a family council or support group?

## Quality of Staff

- How long has the key staff been working at the facility, i.e., administrator, director of nursing, activities director, head chef, floor manager, nurse consultant, medical director?
- Has there been major turnover in key staff recently?
- How many direct-care staff are there for each shift?
- What is the staff to resident ratio? What is the ratio on the night shift? Weekends?
- How many hours of nursing care per day are available?
- What is the turnover rate among direct-care staff?
- Does the direct-care staff understand and speak English?

## NOTES

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- What special training does the staff receive in working with individuals with dementia?
- Do the administration and staff know the residents by name?
- Does the staff take time to talk with residents?
- Do members of the administration and staff interact with residents in a respectful way?
- How long does it take for staff to respond to a resident's request for help or to the call bell?
- Does the staff respect residents' privacy by knocking on doors or announcing themselves before entering rooms?
- Does the staff wear name badges?

## Quality of the Environment

- Are emergency exit signs prominently posted and lit?
- Is the overall decor pleasant and homelike?
- Is the environment clean and odor-free?
- Is the facility quiet or noisy?
- Is the temperature comfortable?
- Does the building seem safe and free from dangerous hazards? Cluttered?
- Are the residents' rooms, hallways, and common areas well lit?
- Are floors finished with non-skid material? Are carpets firm and safe to provide easy walking and prevent falls?
- Is the dining room pleasant and inviting?
- Are common areas, bedrooms and bathrooms accessible to wheelchairs and walkers?
- Are bathrooms conveniently located?
- Do all bathrooms, showers, and bathtubs have handgrips or rails?
- Are call signals easily accessible to residents? At bedside? In bathrooms?
- Do residents' rooms offer privacy, especially in shared rooms?
- Is there a convenient place to conduct private conversation?
- Does every resident's room include for each occupant a bedside table, reading light, chest of drawers and at least one comfortable chair?
- Is there adequate storage space for clothing and personal belongings in each room?
- Does the facility have extra storage space for residents' belongings?

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- Are there outside sitting or walking areas for residents? Are any of them covered to protect the residents from sun and rain?
- Is there a fenced yard? Locked?
- Is a disaster plan posted? How often does the facility hold drills?

## Practical Considerations

### Accessibility

- Is the facility located close to family and friends who will be visiting most frequently?
- Will you be willing to drive a little longer for a well establish facility?
- Is the facility near public transportation?
- Is the facility in a location that is safe to visit at night?
- Is the facility convenient to the resident's doctor? Home health agency?
- Is the facility close to a hospital?
- Are families and friends welcome at any time, or are there strict visiting hours?
- Are emergency services, such as fire and police stations, close by?

### Suitability

- Does the facility have a good reputation in the community?
- Will the facility provide a list of references?
- Are residents and/or family members willing to talk with you about the facility?
- How does the staff treat you when you visit?
- Did they answer all your questions to your satisfaction?
- Did they show you around the entire facility? Were any areas or sections not shown to you? Why?
- Do you feel that the staff consists of people you can work with and communicate with honestly?
- How would you or your loved one fit in? Is this facility compatible with your lifestyle?
- Can you imagine yourself or your loved one living here?
- What was your overall impression of the facility when you visited?

### Affordability

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- Are there any upfront fees, e.g., assessment, community fees?
- What services are not included in the basic rate?
- What is the cost for extra services? Levels of care? How is the need for extra services or higher levels of care determined?
- What are the costs for specialized services, e.g., dementia care?
- Are the costs and payment schedule clearly described in the admission agreement?
- Are the total monthly charges affordable over time?
- Would your loved one be able to stay once all funds are depleted?
- Did the facility explain the EAEDC program to you?

## Environment

**Pay special attention to the following factors when considering a placement for an individual with dementia.**

- Is the facility calm and quiet?
- Does the facility provide soft music and/or natural scents to create a soothing atmosphere?
- Is the facility well lit? Is there adequate natural light?
- Are there complex patterns on carpets or walls, which can cause confusion or other difficulties?
- Can staff easily observe the facility's common areas? Outside areas?
- Can staff easily observe the residents' rooms?
- How does the environment promote resident functioning, e.g., a picture of a toilet on the bathroom door?
- Does the facility have a wander alert system?
- Are the doors equipped with a system to delay exit? The exception, of course, involves an emergency, such as fire.
- Is there a locked or secured outside area for walking?

## Philosophy of Care

- Is the facility's philosophy for caring for persons with dementia consistent with your beliefs?
- Does the facility provide services to persons at all stages of the disease process?
- What conditions or behaviors determine whether a facility will admit and retain someone with dementia?
- Is dementia care provided in a separate unit or as an integrated part of facility services?

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- Is the facility's philosophy and practice of handling "difficult behaviors" compatible with your views? Offer a few examples and ask staff how they would handle the situation.
- What is the facility's philosophy in using physical restraints to deal with certain behaviors? Rest home facilities for the elderly, such as Dodge Park, are severely restricted by law in the use of restraints and psychoactive medications.
- Does the facility recommend the use of psychoactive drugs to treat behaviors?

## Services

- Are there activities specially designed for individuals with dementia?
- Do activity programs operate throughout the day? Evenings? Weekends?
- Are activities individualized for each resident?
- Does the facility provide nutritious snack foods?
- Are water and decaffeinated beverages readily available throughout the day?
- Does the facility conduct periodic night checks?
- How many staff members are awake during the night?

## Staff

- Is the assessment and care planning process coordinated by a person with special knowledge and training in dementia?
- What role does direct-care staff have in the care planning process?
- What role does the resident and family or legal representative play in the care planning process?
- Is the activity program planned and coordinated by a person with special training? Is this person full-time? Have assistants?
- Does the activity coordinator design customized activities for each resident? Who leads one-on-one activities?
- Is a staff member assigned to work with the same residents all the time, or do the staff rotate among residents?
- What is the ratio of direct-care staff to residents in each shift?
- What type of specialized dementia training does the direct-care staff receive initially and on an on-going basis? Content? Number of hours? Frequency?
- Specifically, what type of training does the direct-care staff receive in handling difficult behaviors? Content?

## NOTES



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Number of hours? Frequency?

- Who supervises the direct-care staff? What are their qualifications?
- What special training do the administrators and supervisors receive in dementia care? Content? Number of hours? Frequency?

## Other

- Is the facility in contact with experts in dementia care, such as Alzheimer's diagnostic centers, Alzheimer's Associations, or Regional Caregiver Resource Centers?
- Does the facility have a family support group or refer to community-based groups?
- What does the facility charge for special dementia services? Is there a basic rate that covers all services? Are there additional charges for changing care needs?

NOTES

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Micha Shalev, MHA, CDP, CDCM, CADDCT, is a graduate of the National Council of Certified Dementia Practitioners program, and a well known speaker covering Alzheimer's and Dementia training topics. He's the author of [A Practical Guide for Alzheimer's and Dementia Caregivers](#).

Micha is the co-owner of Dodge Park Rest Home and The Adult Day Club at Dodge Park located at 101 Randolph Road in Worcester, as well as the new state of the art Oasis At Dodge Park. Dodge Park Rest Home is Honored As a "Caring Super Star of 2017" for Excellence in Rest Home and Memory Care for the past 5 years, the only facility in MA with this honor and one of only 67 facilities in the entire country.

The programs at [Dodge Park Rest Home](#) specializes in providing care for individuals with dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

The facility holds a **FREE** monthly support group meeting on the 2nd Tuesday of each month for spouses and children of individuals with dementia and/or Alzheimer's disease so you don't have to face caregiving alone.

The Dodge Park Day Club and the Adult Day Care program at Dodge Park Rest Home, offers a **FREE** full day trial of their adult day program (up to 8 hours) including meals, snacks and activities for **FREE**. They believe when you try their program you will find the answers to your questions. To claim your **FREE** day trial go to [aduldaycareworchester.com](#)

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