



CASTLE WORKS REALTY INC.
REAL ESTATE OPTIONS FOR AGING

HOUSING OPTIONS FOR THE AGING GUIDE

FINDING AN ASSISTED LIVING FACILITY IN NEW YORK



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FINDING AN ASSISTED LIVING FACILITY

Individuals who are finding it difficult to live at home because of increased physical and/or cognitive difficulties may want to consider an assisted living facility as an alternate living arrangement. In order to determine if the assisted living facility is the appropriate Living environment a thorough physical and mental examination should be conducted to identify the individual's level of care need. This evaluation can also help determine the type of assistance that will be necessary in the assisted-living and whether the particular facility can accommodate such care needs. The evaluation may also provide helpful information about future care needs.

When exploring assisted-living Options it is also necessary to examine the financial situation of the prospective resident. What are the sources of income and what assets does the individual have? Can he or she afford the monthly fees and for how long? It also is prudent to examine the individual's estate plan and determine whether consideration has been made concerning who would step in for the resident in the event of incapacity with respect to financial management and healthcare decision making. This type of planning can be accomplished by executing a Durable Power of Attorney for financial management and a Healthcare Proxy/Living Will for healthcare decision making.

What Services Does the Assisted Living Facility Provide?

In order to determine if the Assisted Living Facility (ALF) is appropriate, it is important to understand the kinds of services provided. The ALF generally provides the following services:

- 24-hour supervision
- Assistance and security
- Meals
- Help with activities of daily living including bathing dressing eating, toileting, house cleaning and laundry
- Medication management and monitoring healthcare management
- Monitoring and assistance with dementia programs
- Social activities and opportunities for community interaction and support

Developing a Personal Care Plan

In order to properly determine if the assisted living facility is the next appropriate housing option, it is necessary to assess the physical/mental needs of the individual as well as their social and emotional needs. This information will be vital to the development of a short-term and long-term care plan for the resident. This can be accomplished by developing a Personal Care Plan.

It is also necessary to determine the individual's personal goals and expectations as well as examining the financial requirements of the facility and the financial and income ability of the individual.

There should also be a review of all estate planning and contingency plans for the individual. Does the individual have a Durable Power of Attorney or Healthcare Proxy? Has the individual executed a Last Will & Testament and/or a Living Trust? Will the resident require Medicaid in the near future? Does the facility take Medicaid payments? Also, it is necessary to determine if there are any capacity or incompetency issues that must be factored into the decision-making process. This process can be complicated especially if the individual lacks insight into his or her physical and mental limitations. Professional evaluations may be appropriate and necessary. It may also be necessary to engage in short-term supportive and goal-oriented counseling in order to help the individual navigate the transition from home to the ALF.

The assisted living option is often designed to create an environment that is similar to a home life setting. However, it is often necessary to determine if the facility can meet the individual's current physical and mental health needs and whether the individual can receive increased care in the same facility if necessary. Some facilities have the flexibility and the professional services to accommodate individual care needs such as a decrease in mobility requiring the use of a walker or wheelchair. Other facilities are not equipped to make these types of accommodations. Likewise, some facilities have a separate unit for dementia residents. It is advisable to explore the availability of the care options with the facility. Continuity of care should be a major goal when searching for an appropriate ALF.

What to Look for in an Assisted Living Facility

When searching for an ALF there are many factors to consider. It is highly recommended that an on-site visit take place for all perspective assisted living facilities. Some of the criteria is set forth below:

- First, look at the appearance, cleanliness and organization, decor and maintenance of the facility. Does it feel comfortable and inviting?
- How old is the facility, who owns and manages it, what is the financial health/strength of the facility?
- What type of training does the staff have?
- What are the credentials of the staff members?
- What is the resident to staff ratio?
- Is there an opportunity to receive increased care within the facility, by whom, and what are the limitations, if any, to aging in place?
- Does the facility offer ALP, a Medicaid assisted living program?
- What is the availability of medical/primary healthcare treatment on site? Is there a doctor or nurse on duty at all times and is there an on-site practitioner?
- Take into account how the staff interacts with the residents. How do they respond to their needs?
- What types of social and religious activities are available in the assisted living facility and also in the neighborhood?
- Is there transportation to local houses of worship, libraries and cultural events?
- Is supportive counseling and/or spiritual support being offered in the assisted living facility?
- How does the food taste, what is the nutritional value?
- Who prepares the meals?
- Is there a staff dietician/nutritionist?

- What types of safety measures are being employed?
- What types of infectious disease controls are in place, and how are they enforced? Can you drop by without an appointment? Talk to the residents and their families?
- Finally, is the group of residents a good match for the perspective resident? How do they interact with each other? Would the prospective resident fit in?