



## RESIDENTIAL CARE FACILITIES FOR THE ELDERLY

### DEMENTIA CARE CHECKLIST

In addition to the questions in the *Evaluation Checklist*, the following special considerations need to be taken into account when considering a placement for a person with dementia.

#### Environment

- Is the facility calm and quiet?
- Does the facility use soft music and/or natural scents to create a soothing atmosphere?
- Is the facility well lighted? Adequate natural light?
- Are there complex patterns on carpets or walls?
- 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?
- 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 facility provide services to persons at all stages of the disease process?
- What conditions or behaviors determine whether a facility will either admit or retain someone with dementia?
- Is dementia care provided in a separate unit or as an integral part of the facility's services?
- Is the facility's philosophy and practice of handling "difficult behaviors" compatible with your views?  
(Give 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?\*
- Does the facility recommend the use of psychoactive drugs to treat behaviors?\*

\*Note: Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly have severe restrictions on the use of restraints and the use of psychoactive medications.

#### SERVICES

- Are there activities specially designed for persons with dementia?
- Do activity programs operate throughout the day? In the evening? And on weekends?
- Are activities individualized for each resident?
- Does the facility operate a "Safe Return" program (e.g., residents registered with police) for all residents?
- Does the facility provide nutritious finger foods?
- Are water and decaffeinated beverages available throughout the day?
- Does the facility do periodic night checks? Number of staff who are awake during the night?

## DEMENTIA CARE CHECKLIST

### STAFF

- Does a person(s) with special knowledge and training about dementia coordinate the assessment and care planning process?
- 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?
- Does a person(s) with special training plan and coordinate the activity program? Is this person full-time? Have assistants?
- Does the activity coordinator design customized activities for each resident? Who does one-on-one activities?
- Is staff assigned to work with the same residents?
- What is the ratio of direct care staff to residents at each shift?
- What type of specialized dementia training does direct care staff receive initially and on an on-going basis? Content? Number of hours?
- Specifically, what type of training does direct care staff receive in handling difficult behaviors? Content? Number of hours? Frequency?
- Who supervises staff? What are their qualifications?
- What special training does the administrator and supervisors receive in dementia care? Content? Number of hours? Frequency?

### OTHER

- Is the facility in contact with experts in dementia care like the 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?
- Does the facility meet all of the licensing standards to provide dementia care? (*Ask to review the plan of operation submitted to the licensing agency. The plan should contain information about the philosophy of care, special services and staff training.*)
- 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? How and who determines the rate changes?

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For more information, contact:

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