



# Transitional care guide

## Avalon Memory Care – Family owned and family focused

At Avalon Memory Care all of our focus and attention is on you and your loved one. Since 1995, our family has been dedicated to helping the people in our community through the difficult process of transitioning loved ones to a home that meets their evolving care needs.



Avalon Memory Care has pioneered a unique model of care that is tailored to the individual special needs of those afflicted with Alzheimer's disease and cognitive impairments in a safe and secure environment. Our comprehensive philosophy of care means that we attend to the physical, emotional, social and spiritual needs of each resident to ensure they achieve their full quality of life potential with individualized daily routines.

At Avalon, we emphasize activities of life that promote each resident's self-esteem, dignity and peace of mind within each community. This special approach oftentimes results in a reduction of medications, increased appetite and acceptance of our new surroundings. Surrounded by an experienced team of Avalon professionals and familiar treasures, residents live in the comfort and privacy of their own rooms in a spacious, home-like environment with built-in security features to maintain resident safety from elopement including a secured patio and backyard. They enjoy luxury accommodations including exquisite furnishings in homes designed to promote a home-like feel as opposed to larger institutional environments. The combination of environment, customized care and our loving approach allow our residents to bond with their care team, giving their loved one peace of mind.

Our specialized and individualized care has received recognition from well-known industry organizations, as well as the many families we have served. Our mission at Avalon is to be the premier option in dementia care so we can continue to provide superior service to the families in our homes. Our award-winning care and loving staff allows residents and their families to bond with the care team like a family sharing the good days, and hugs along with the more difficult days.

At Avalon Memory Care, we invite you and your family into our family to provide the best possible care in a home-like environment. The home is important to us. It's where we grew up and raised our families. It is the most comfortable living environment to allow those with dementia to live as naturally as possible with this devastating disease – especially as they regress through their years of life as is often the case.

## The right type of care facility for you

You may feel increased stress and guilt once your loved one's disease is diagnosed. Providing care by yourself is going to get more challenging as your loved one progresses with their dementia, Alzheimer's disease or other cognitive impairments. Identifying that your loved one needs more emotional support and individual care than they are currently receiving is the first step in making a change in their care situation. Our family approach is beneficial to staff, resident and family members. Whether your loved one is currently at home or in an assisted living facility, or discharging from a medical facility, there are several things to consider when choosing the best fit for your family.

It's part of our mission to assist families with the selection process by providing you with as much information as we can to prepare you for the difficult decision ahead. This guide will help you become familiar with the many factors that come into play when reviewing your options. We encourage you to explore all of your potential options in care to make the best informed decision possible for your loved one.

Memory Care centers can vary greatly, and they offer different types of services, structures of care and housing opportunities. Your basic choices are to stay at home, independent living facility, assisted living facility, a memory care facility or a nursing home. While some of these facilities seem similar, there are important differences for you to consider. The most noticeable differences, before evaluating the mission and care policies, are in the licensure, size and design of the physical building itself.

Many institutions offer a variety of care in one large building, serving residents with a wide range of care and medical needs co-mingled together. Often the memory care resident is unable to exist in these large operations because dementia care is not individualized in their business model. They have a higher staff to resident ratio with less consistent staff and much higher turnover. It is difficult for these units to offer personalized and family-style care because



of the institutionalized staffing patterns that focus on profitability over staff, family and resident. They usually feel as welcoming and homelike as a hospital. After moving a loved one into homes, we regularly hear from families that, "I wish I knew of Avalon three years ago upon diagnosis."

Stand-alone care homes are more ideally suited toward those with memory care needs. Residents, staff and family members benefit from being in a family-style home rather than an institutional building with large floorplans that may cause confusion and anxiety for residents. A family-style setting is very familiar and comforting and offers many amenities not found in assisted living locations. Oftentimes larger, institutional-like facilities will be full of loud noises and beeping machines, which can upset and agitate many with cognitive impairments. Residents thrive with staff in smaller care centers. The Avalon staff is able to interact with residents and their family members in a meaningful manner, provide stimulation and get to know their residents' individual personalities and preferences. The staff at stand-alone memory care homes have generally been trained to better manage the care of residents afflicted with dementia.<sup>1</sup> Having trained and experienced team members promotes the best quality of life for our residents.

Our family approach is beneficial to staff, resident and family members.





## Key concerns in making your choice

Just the thought of putting your loved one in a memory care home can be overwhelming. At Avalon Memory Care, we understand that this kind of life-changing decision is not to be taken lightly, or without very careful consideration for the needs of you, your family and your loved one.



**Cost of care is always a primary concern** for the family and should be used to narrow your list of options. You should develop your budget based on how much you can afford for care, housing and services for your loved one. Focus on facilities that truly meet your loved one's needs and stay within your budget so that you are spending time on realistic options. At Avalon, we will take the time to sit down with you and discuss your finances to look at the whole picture as opposed to just monthly costs for a journey with an unknown timeline.

Start by asking about standard monthly costs and what is included in that standard rate. Ask about the add-on costs for private rooms and any specialized care that may be needed. As you determine the base cost of each facility, keep in mind that there are several other factors that will impact your out-of-pocket costs each month. Ask about the following:

- Will my long-term care insurance cover any of the health care costs involved in the services fee?
- What types of financial planning support do you offer?
- Are there any payment plans available or assistance to defer costs?



**Staff-to-resident ratio** is a very important factor that tells you how much care your loved one will actually receive. Many operations have a 1-to-15 ratio of staff-to-residents, whereas Avalon homes have a ratio of 1-to-5. This allows the staff to have more interaction with residents and provide more personalized care. Avalon homes average 20 residents per home, while many other facilities have over 100 residents at a location.



**Location is very important for the family** as you will want to be close enough that you can make frequent visits. The farther the drive, the less likely you and the family may be able to make more regular visits.



**The specific types of residents accepted** can vary according to the different types of facilities. You will need to inquire about your loved one's specific situation and needs. At Avalon, we are capable of taking more complex cases such as dementia as well as other comorbidities, including residents with mental health or behavioral issues, that other facilities might not be capable of meeting their needs. We are able to continue providing a high level care as the resident's dementia progresses or behaviors arise because of our staff's training and experience. We accept residents with all forms of dementia, including Alzheimer's disease, vascular dementia and dementia from Parkinson's disease, frontotemporal dementia and Lewy body dementia in our Avalon homes. All of our Avalon locations allow for aging in place and are prepared to offer individualized care from early stage dementia all the way through end of life.



**The approach to care** is a very important factor that will require you to probe for information regarding the use of medications to manage residents. Many operations utilize medications that can inhibit the residents' quality of life. At Avalon, we take great pride in our thoughtful and consistent approach to care. We believe that mood stabilizing medications can be important, when necessary, as long as the dosage isn't affecting the resident's ability to eat, drink, walk or thrive.

We believe in a multidisciplinary care plan to manage organic medical issues while adjusting the environment to accommodate the resident in their world of confusion. We are proud of our experienced staff and caregivers that have spent years with our family rather than the constant turnover one can see in some facilities. Our family-style home setting and our stimulating daily activities provide a therapeutic environment that our residents thrive in. Our compassionate, nonconfrontational approach allows staff to focus on joining the resident on their journey of confusion rather than forcing the resident into our world of reality that they are no longer able to access. This results in structured routine and less use of medications.

<sup>1</sup> Dementia Care Central, How "Memory Care" for Dementia / Alzheimer's Differs from Assisted Living.

Many operations have a 1-to-15 ratio of staff-to-residents, whereas Avalon homes have a ratio of 1-to-5. This allows the staff to have more interaction with residents and provide more personalized care.



## Make a personal visit for a tour

As you are conducting a search for memory care options for your loved one, we recommend focusing on both the individual websites and third party or user reviews of the facilities. After researching, narrow your choices down to your top three list and give them a call. The best thing you can do is schedule a tour and spend some time with an admission coordinator so you can ask questions and get to know the facility and system of care.

Questions to ask during your tour:

What is the staff-to-resident ratio here?

What is the protocol for a medical emergency?

What are the meal plans available? Do residents have choices? Are there exceptions for those with specific dietary needs?

What is included in the housing? Are there shared or private rooms? Do we bring our own furniture? What items do you encourage residents to bring with them?

Tell me about the activities that help make residents feel at home and connected with others.

Do you routinely refer residents out to geriatric psychiatric facilities to manage behaviors related to dementia?

What happens if my loved one becomes agitated or aggressive?

Now that you've toured facilities, you should be ready to make a decision on what facility you want to place your loved one in. It is wise to include other family members in this decision, as the transition will be easier if you're all on the same page. Make sure to pick a facility that can provide your loved one with the necessary care.



## Making your selection

Once you've made your choice, reconnect with the admission coordinator to discuss the application and admission process. You'll want to ask if your loved one will receive an intake evaluation to provide a customized approach to admission. If so, you should find out what this assessment will entail and what you should expect after this has taken place. There will be a list of information and documents you will need for the application. You'll also want a copy of all this information available upon admission to make sure everything is on file. Be sure to keep a list of where the originals of these documents reside for safekeeping in case you ever need to provide another copy or another family member has to handle something for you. Ask the admission coordinator if there's anything beyond our suggested checklist that you may need to prepare along with the application.

Upon meeting with an admission coordinator and providing an initial deposit, be prepared to provide some of these essential documents:

- Copy of Medicare/Insurance Coverage cards
- Copy of Legal Power of Attorney, Health care Proxy, Living Will and Advance Directives, if applicable
- Copy of medical records
- List of all medical professionals currently treating the resident
- Allergy list
- Current medication list
- List of medical conditions and treatments





## Preparing for the move

Your admissions coordinator will help you determine what transition approach your family should use with the resident based upon their individual conditions. Moving your loved one into a home-like setting allows for an easier transition without the chaos and over stimulation of a larger facility. We advise that most families handle the packing without including their loved one because memory care residents can get agitated very easily. As you pack, here are some suggested items to include:

- Furniture (if necessary)
- Bedding and towels
- Pictures, photo albums and other keepsakes that won't be a danger to themselves or other residents
- Medications
- Bathroom essentials and any beauty or hair products (No harmful items allowed)

We suggest setting up the room as identically as possible to help with the transition into their new home. We know the transition of your loved one may be hard on you. But, with our individualized transition plans, your loved one will adjust with ease because we are able to customize their activities, meals and lifestyle to keep their routine intact from day one.



## Avalon Memory Care

Avalon is a family owned company committed to providing a stable and consistent family-style, home-like environment with exceptional care for all of our residents. Being family owned enables us to focus more on the quality of care than the corporate operations that are often subject to mergers, absorptions or acquisitions and high staff turnover. It also allows us to ensure that your loved one is receiving the best care available.

As you take this emotional journey and face this pivotal crossroad, let us be there for you as your emotional support guide, your educator and your health care advocate. We know how strong the bonds of family are; let us provide that same level of care for you and your loved ones. Avalon is a family owned and operated company that has been the predominant leader in palliative dementia care since 1995. Our unique family-style homes provide residents both superior quality of care and luxury accommodations unrivaled across the industry.

Remember that at Avalon Memory Care homes, we put family first, and focus on providing joy and quality of life for your whole family. We look forward to helping you in any way we can. Please feel free to contact us at 972-525-7044 or [AvalonMemoryCare.com](http://AvalonMemoryCare.com).



See for yourself what makes us special

Dallas / Fort Worth Metroplex  
(26 Locations)  
Houston  
(4 Locations)  
Austin

San Antonio  
St. Louis  
Beaumont  
Edinburg

972-525-7044  
888-384-1310  
[AvalonMemoryCare.com](http://AvalonMemoryCare.com)  
Facility ID #106406