

Considerations for Facility Care Options

Help & Support



There are many important factors to consider when choosing the right care facility for a person with FTD. Since FTD is not as common or as well-known as other types of dementia, FTD-specific facilities are generally not available, and families often find themselves having to advocate for their loved one by adapting the services for their needs.

After an initial phone call, the best way to evaluate a facility is to visit, look around, and talk with the people there. These first visits can be emotionally draining, so make sure to give yourself grace and reach out for support if needed. Remember that you are considering facility care because it might be the best care option for your loved one at this stage in their FTD journey. If possible, bring someone with you for the tour to have a second set of eyes and ears.

Tours of the unit or facility often start with a staff member. Don't hesitate to ask them questions. If you can, plan a second visit as well, either during a mealtime or on an evening or weekend to see the facility during non-peak staff times. If you have additional questions after your visit, ask for a meeting or phone call with an administrator. Be honest about why you are seeking facility care, and about the care needs of the person with FTD, to better understand the facility's approach and ability to provide care. Remember that you are and will continue to be an essential member of your loved one's care team.

Below are some sample questions you can ask to help you find the right care facility for your loved one.

Programs

1. How do you orient and support new residents during their initial weeks in the facility? How do you introduce them and their care needs to the staff?
2. What kinds of care can and cannot be provided in memory care or in the facility? Are there times when residents may need to be moved to different units or another placement?
3. In what situations may a resident be sent to the hospital instead of receiving care in the facility?
4. How often do you check on a resident during the day, evening, and sleeping hours?
5. Are services such as physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy available within the facility?
6. What hospice or palliative care programs do you work with?
7. What does a typical day look like for your residents?
8. Is participation in daily activities required? Many people with FTD have trouble engaging with a group; what alternatives are available? Are there additional fees for activities?
9. Are residents free to move about the unit? Are there outside areas available for the residents? How do you supervise residents both inside and outside the facility?

Considerations for Facility Care Options

Help & Support



Staffing

1. What are the staffing ratios? Does it vary based on the shift? What do weekends and holidays look like compared to peak times?
2. What supervision or management is available on evening, night, weekend, and holiday shifts?
3. Are there consistent, regular staff on each shift or do they rotate? (Check to see if staff name tags are visible and ask if there are ways to identify different staff roles, such as through scrub colors.)
4. What is the staff turnover rate, and what is the average staff member's tenure?
5. Can we meet your executive director/administrator and director of nursing? How long have they been with you, and how long has your building been open?

FTD & Care Planning

1. What knowledge or experience do the administrator, director of nursing, and direct care staff have working with people with FTD? Was their experience positive or negative? Are they open to learning more?
2. What type of dementia-specific training does the facility have, and who receives it? Does the training include information specific to FTD?
3. Are there behavioral or psychiatric health services available within the facility? If not, who oversees psychoactive medication?
4. How do you coordinate with specialists such as neurologists or geriatric psychiatrists for outpatient appointments and consultations?
5. How does staff develop care plans based on the person's specific needs?
6. How do you approach personal care such as bathing and hygiene, especially if the person is hesitant or resistant?
7. How does the staff address behavior issues? Can you provide some examples of ways the interdisciplinary team has approached specific care needs or behaviors?
8. What is the community's philosophy on handling a situation where a resident displays agitated behaviors or has a conflict with another resident or staff member? What is the protocol in these situations?
9. What communication tools do staff employ if a person has difficulty speaking or understanding directions?
10. How soon will I be invited to a care conference after admission? How often are they held? How do you include family care partners in care planning?

If you have additional questions or need further support, the AFTD HelpLine is here to help. Contact [866-507-7222](tel:866-507-7222) or info@theaftd.org.

The Association for Frontotemporal Degeneration
theaftd.org | HelpLine: 1.866.507.7222 | info@theaftd.org

© 2024 The Association for Frontotemporal Degeneration