



ASSISTED LIVING TOURS: Red Flag Answers to Watch For

Not every concerning answer means a facility is a bad choice. But repeated vague, defensive, or dismissive responses should prompt follow-up questions — or a second look.

Use this page while reviewing notes from tours or phone calls.

Red Flags About Operational Challenges

Be cautious if you hear:

- “We don’t really have any challenges right now.”
- “Staffing hasn’t been an issue for us.” (Nearly all facilities face staffing pressure.)
- “That’s not something families usually ask about.”
- “I don’t have those numbers handy.”

Why it matters:

Well-run facilities acknowledge challenges and explain how they manage them.

Red Flags About Staffing and Care

Be cautious if you hear:

- “Our staff turnover is about the same as everywhere else.”
- “Residents adjust to different caregivers.”
- “We’re always hiring.” (High turnover may be ongoing.)
- “We don’t share staff-to-resident ratios.”

Why it matters:

Care consistency depends heavily on stable staffing.

Red Flags About What the Facility Does Not Offer

Be cautious if you hear:

- “No one here has ever needed that service.”
- “If that comes up, families usually figure it out.”
- “We’ll cross that bridge when we get there.”
- “That’s outside our scope” (without explaining alternatives).

Why it matters:

You need a clear plan for gaps in services — not assumptions.

Red Flags About Future Services and Planning

Be cautious if you hear:

- “We don’t really plan that far ahead.”
- “Those decisions are made at the corporate level.”
- “There’s talk about adding that, but no timeline.”
- “We haven’t discussed that internally.”

Why it matters:

Lack of planning can lead to disruptive moves later.

Red Flags About Costs and Contracts

Be cautious if you hear:

- “Most residents don’t see big increases.”
- “It depends” (without explaining what triggers increases).
- “Everything is included” (ask for a written breakdown).
- “You can review the contract after move-in.”

Why it matters:

Unclear pricing is one of the most common sources of family complaints.

Red Flags About Daily Life and Independence

Be cautious if you hear:

- “We strongly encourage participation.”
- “Residents are expected to follow the schedule.”
- “That’s just how we do things here.”
- “Complaints usually work themselves out.”

Why it matters:

Assisted living should support independence — not quietly restrict it.

Red Flags About the 80/20 Rule for 55+ Communities

Be cautious if you hear:

- “I’m not familiar with that rule.”
- “It’s flexible.”
- “We don’t track ages that closely.”
- “It hasn’t been an issue.”

Why it matters:

Facilities should clearly understand and monitor compliance with housing rules.

A Final Reminder for Readers

- Trust patterns, not single answers.
- One vague response may be harmless.
- Several vague answers often signal deeper issues.

If something doesn’t sit right, it’s okay to pause, revisit later, or look elsewhere.