

Three Conversation Tips to Ensure a Safe and Comfortable Living Space

A good welcome focuses on making residents immediately comfortable, physically and emotionally. It starts with meeting a resident's family before move-in so the direct-care team can get to know the resident, explain how to design a room for maximum safety and comfort, and share examples of an optimal living space.

The following three conversation tips will help guide this important discussion so family members know what to expect ahead of time and communities can provide a comfortable and safe experience for the new resident.

1 **My Favorite Things: Understand a Resident's Personal Habits and Routines**

It's important to understand a resident's personal story, daily routines, interests as well as likes and dislikes. Discover their personal preferences by asking family members the following questions. Residents will feel calm and settled in their new environment if their personal needs are being met. And, family members will be reassured their loved ones are getting personalized care.

- What time do they go to bed and wake up?
When do they nap?
- What are their daily activities?
Do they have any hobbies?
- What type of food do they like to eat?
What time do they eat meals?
- Do they sleep with a light on?
- What type of clothing do they prefer for morning and evening?
- Do they sleep with the door open or closed?
- Do they shower in the morning or evening?
- What are their favorite TV shows?

2 **Room Design: Create a Safe Living Space with Less is More Approach**

Invite family members to visit the resident's room before move-in to discuss mobility status and underscore the less is more approach to designing a safe living space.

Mobility: What is their status?

Clear pathways are needed to navigate wheelchairs, walkers, etc.

Personal Items

Discuss creating a cozy atmosphere with photos and framed pictures.

Furniture: Less is more.

Discuss common items.

- **Bed:** Size and type of bed will dictate position in room
- **Lamp:** Easy to turn on and off, and accessible
- **Bedside table:** Round table to help prevent injury
- **TV:** Should it be mounted or secured to wall?
- **Dresser:** Limit number of drawers and consider anchoring to wall
- **Chair:** Sturdy option that doesn't swivel or rock

High-Contrast Colors

- Help delineate perimeters of furniture and assist residents with waning eyesight
- Simple patterns or solid colors on furniture and blankets are better for residents with depth perception and field of vision changes

3 Sample Space: Share Examples of a Well-Designed Bedroom

Since memory care bedrooms are limited on space, share exact room dimensions and examples of good floor plans with family members. Discuss optimal furniture size and positioning, such as putting a bed flush against the wall, so families know what to bring and what to leave behind.

