

THE ROAD TO AN INFORMED DECISION



WHICH PROVIDER AGENCY IS BEST FOR YOUR FAMILY MEMBER?



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It is important to visit several agencies to determine which agency you would like to provide residential supports to your family member.

Choose the agencies you would like to visit. Your service coordinator can provide you a list of the St. Louis area residential community providers. They may be able to provide you information on which agencies have openings and who may be doing new development.

WHAT YOU WANT TO KNOW

AGENCY

- How long has the agency been providing supports?
- How many people does the agency provide residential services to?
- What other services does the agency provide?
- Has the agency earned a national accreditation?
- What is the Agency philosophy? Family involvement ~ how do you support family member and family to make decisions related to your family member ~ Intimate relationships ~
- Ask to speak to other families whose family members obtain services from the agency. Parent to Parent is the best source of information!!!
- Ask to visit a home or two when the residents are home. (*Remember you are a visitor in their home.*)



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STAFF

- What is the Agency management structure?
- What is the staff turnover rate? ~ Direct Care and Management staff
 - How are hours covered in the home when there is a staff shortage?
- What is the training program for new staff, as well as on-going trainings?
- How does the agency pre-screen potential employees?
- What is the educational background of your staff?

FAMILY

- Family involvement
- When can you visit your family member?
- Can anyone visit or are there parameters set?

HEALTH CARE

- How many nursing personnel on staff?
- What is the nurses role in healthcare management?
- What is the process for Health and Dental Care; appointments, utilize current dr.'s, staff support, family involvement?
- What is the agency procedure for new medication and prescription changes?



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THE VISIT

- Is the home environment inviting and warm?
- Does the home express the interests of the individuals living there?
- Is the furniture and other things in the home in good repair?
- Do the people living in the home appear to be happy?
 - Ask them questions ~ do they like where they live ~ do they enjoy their roommates and staff ~ how are they involved in their community ~ who chooses the activities they participate in ~
- Observe communication by staff: are courteous and speak respectfully to the people living in the home?
- Are staff knowledgeable about the people living in the home ~ how does the home operate?
- Ask staff to explain the emergency and on call procedure?
- What happens if there is a medical emergency?
- What are your procedures for making sure my family members money is accounted for on a regular basis?
- How often does a staff member communicate with the family ~ Is there a weekly, monthly or as needed phone call to you?
- Will my family member have an individualized plan for supports?
- Inquire on how often supervisors routinely visit the home.
- Can staff explain the agency values and mission?
- What do you like best about working for this agency?



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