

Glossary

Activities of Daily Living (ADLs): A term used by healthcare professionals to refer to the basic self-care tasks an individual does on a day-to-day basis. (ex: walking, bathing, dressing, feeding, toileting, transferring)

Acute care: A branch of secondary healthcare where a patient receives active but short-term treatment for a severe injury or episode of illness, an urgent medical condition, or during recovery from surgery. In medical terms, care for acute health conditions is the opposite from chronic care or longer term care.

Adaptive/Assistive equipment: Devices that are used to assist with completing activities of daily living.

Adult Day services: A professional care setting in which older adults, adults living with dementia, or adults living with disabilities receive individualized therapeutic, social, and health services for some part of the day.

Adult Protective Services (APS): A social services program provided by state and/or local governments nationwide serving older adults and adults with disabilities who are in need of assistance. APS workers investigate cases of abuse, neglect, or exploitation working closely with a wide variety of allied professionals such as physicians, nurses, paramedics, firefighters, and law enforcement officers.

Advance care planning: Making decisions about the care you would want to receive if you become unable to speak for yourself. These are your decisions to make and are based on your personal values and preferences.

Age friendly health system: A designation recognizing a system-wide commitment to improving the health and well-being of older adults and reliably providing a set of four evidence-based elements of high-quality care, known as the "4Ms," to all older adults in their system: What Matters, Medication, Mentation, and Mobility.

Aging in place: The ability to live in one's own home and community safely, independently, and comfortably regardless of age, income, or ability level.

Alzheimer's disease: Type of dementia that causes problems with memory, thinking and behavior. Symptoms usually develop slowly and get worse over time, becoming severe enough to interfere with daily tasks.

Area Agency on Aging (AAA): A nationwide network of state and local programs that help older adults to plan and care for their lifelong needs. They were created under the federal Older Americans Act.

Assisted living residences: A system of housing and limited care that is designed for senior citizens who need some assistance with daily activities but do not require care in a nursing home.

Care consultations: A meeting with a trained professional who will help navigate difficult caregiving decisions and family issues; assess current needs and anticipate future care challenges; develop an effective care plan; assist with problem solving; and offer supportive listening in a confidential, nonjudgmental environment.

Care manager: As healthcare providers, care managers provide for their patients by matching patient needs with appropriate services. Care managers who act as facility supervisors may be in charge of business operations and oversee patient care at clinics, hospitals, nursing homes, and other healthcare facilities.

Caregiver, family/designated representative, or care partner: Family members, friends, or neighbors who provide unpaid assistance to a person with a chronic illness or disabling condition.

Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA): A person who assists patients with healthcare needs and cares for a patient who is ill or recovering from a surgery or disease. CNA duties are assigned by a registered professional nurse.

Chronic disease: According to the definition by the U.S. National Center for Health Statistics, a chronic disease is one lasting 3 months or more. Chronic diseases generally cannot be prevented by vaccines or cured by medication, nor do they just disappear.

Clinical trials: Research investigations in which people volunteer to test new treatments, interventions, or tests as a means to prevent, detect, treat or manage various diseases or medical conditions. Some investigations look at how people respond to a new intervention and what side effects might occur.

Co-morbidities: The simultaneous presence of two chronic diseases or conditions in a patient.

Cognition: The mental action or process of acquiring knowledge and understanding through thought, experience, and the senses.

Congregate housing: Congregate housing, or congregate living, offers independent living in separate apartments.

Conservator: A guardian or protector.

Continuing care retirement communities: A continuing care retirement community, sometimes known as a life plan community, is a type of retirement community in the U.S. where a continuum of aging care needs (independent living, assisted living, and skilled nursing care) can all be met within the community.

Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease: A fatal degenerative disease affecting nerve cells in the brain, causing mental, physical, and sensory disturbances such as dementia and seizures. It is believed to be caused by prions and hence to be related to Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) and other spongiform encephalopathies such as kuru and scrapie.

Custodial care: Non-medical care that helps individuals with their daily basic care, such as eating and bathing. Custodial care for an individual is recommended by an authorized medical personnel, but providers of custodial care are not required to be medical professionals.

Decubitus ulcers (pressure ulcers, pressure sores, or bedsores): A sore developed due to pressure caused by lying in bed in one position for an extended period of time.

Delirium: An acutely disturbed state of mind that occurs in fever, intoxication, and other disorders and is characterized by restlessness, illusions, and incoherence of thought and speech.

Dementia: A chronic or persistent disorder of the mental processes caused by brain disease or injury and marked by memory disorders, personality changes, and impaired reasoning.

Dementia Dialogues®: An evidence-informed, nationally registered, intervention training program created by the University of South Carolina to designed to educate community members and caregivers about Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.

Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) order: A medical order written by a doctor that instructs healthcare providers not to do cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) if a patient's breathing stops or if the patient's heart stops beating.

Down Syndrome dementia: As they age, individuals affected by Down syndrome have a greatly increased risk of developing a type of dementia that's either the same as or very similar to Alzheimer's disease.

Durable power of attorney for finances: A power of attorney (POA) which typically remains in effect until the death of the principal or until the document is revoked.

Elder abuse: An intentional act or failure to act that causes or creates a risk of harm to an older adult.

Elder law: An area of law that covers a number of different legal issues affecting older adults, their caregivers, and relatives.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP): A voluntary, work-based program that offers free and confidential assessments, short-term counseling, referrals, and follow-up services to employees who have personal and/or work-related problems.

Estate planning: A process involving the counsel of professional advisors who are familiar with your goals and concerns, your assets and how they are owned, and your family structure. It can involve the services of a variety of professionals, including your lawyer, accountant, financial planner, life insurance advisor, banker, and broker.

Executor: A person or institution appointed by an individual to carry out the terms of their will.

Faith based support: Support affiliated with, supported by, or based on a religion or religious group.

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA): Entitles eligible employees of covered employers to take unpaid, job-protected leave for specified family and medical reasons with continuation of group health insurance coverage under the same terms and conditions as if the employee had not taken leave.

Formal caregiver: A person trained in providing care and who is paid for their services.

Frontotemporal degeneration (FTD): A group of brain disorders caused by degeneration of the frontal and/or temporal lobes of the brain. FTD is also frequently referred to as frontotemporal dementia, frontotemporal lobar degeneration (FTLD), or Pick's disease.

Functional impairment: Limitations due to an illness.

Geriatric psychiatrist: Psychiatrists that specialize in the diagnosis and treatment of mental conditions affecting older adults over the age of 65.

Geriatrician: An expert in the branch of medicine or social science dealing with the health and care of older adults.

Guardianship: The position of being legally responsible for the care of someone who is unable to manage their own affairs.

Health assessment: A health assessment is a plan of care that identifies the specific needs of a person and how those needs will be addressed by the healthcare system or skilled nursing facility. Health assessment is the evaluation of the health status by performing a physical exam after taking a health history.

Home health agency: A public or private organization that delivers skilled nursing and other therapeutic service to a patient at home.

Home health aide: A trained and certified healthcare worker who provides assistance with personal care (hygiene and exercise), household duties (meal preparation and light housekeeping), and monitors the patient's condition in the patient's home.

Hospice care: Compassionate comfort care (as opposed to curative care) for people facing a terminal illness with a prognosis of six months or less, based on their physician's estimate if the disease runs its course as expected.

Huntington's disease: A hereditary disease marked by degeneration of the brain cells and causing chorea and progressive dementia.

In-home/personal care: Also known as non-skilled care, non-medical care, or companion care, personal care services at home allows you to live in the comfort of your own home for as long as possible. Remaining at home may provide you with an enhanced quality of life that you might not experience in other settings.

Independent living: Communities designed to feel and function like a private residence.

Informal caregiver: Provide regular, unpaid care or assistance to a friend or family member who has a health problem or disability.

Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs): Self-care tasks that require more complex thinking or organizational skills. (ex: managing finances, transportation, communication, medication management.)

Korsakoff syndrome: A chronic memory disorder caused by severe deficiency of thiamine (vitamin B-1). Korsakoff syndrome is most commonly caused by alcohol misuse, but certain other conditions also can cause the syndrome.

Lewy Body dementia: A disease associated with abnormal deposits of a protein called alpha-synuclein in the brain. These deposits, called Lewy bodies, affect chemicals in the brain whose changes, in turn, can lead to problems with thinking, movement, behavior, and mood.

Living will: A written statement detailing a person's desires regarding their medical treatment in circumstances in which they are no longer able to express informed consent, especially an advance directive.

Long-term care: A variety of services designed to meet a person's health or personal care needs during a short or long period of time. These services help people live as independently and safely as possible when they can no longer perform everyday activities on their own.

Long-distance caregiving: Caregiving for someone an hour or more away from you.

Long-term care Insurance: Reimburse policyholders a daily amount (up to a pre-selected limit) for services to assist them with activities of daily living such as bathing, dressing, or eating.

Long-term care ombudsman: Seeks resolution of problems and advocates for the rights of residents of long-term care facilities to ensure and enhance the quality of life and care of residents.

Medicaid: A public health insurance program that provides healthcare coverage to low-income families and individuals in the United States.

Medicaid-certified: Recognition by a state agency or other such entity administering a particular state's Medicaid program that a healthcare provider or supplier is in compliance with all the conditions of participation set forth in the appropriate state and federal Medicaid Regulations.

Medicare-certified: Offering services at a level of quality approved by Medicare.

Medicare: A federal health insurance for people 65 or older, some younger people with disabilities, or people with End-Stage Renal Disease.

Memory care communities: A kind of specialized care for people living with Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia.

Mild Cognitive Impairment (MCI): A condition in which people have more memory or thinking problems than other people their age. The symptoms of MCI are not as severe as those of Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia. People with MCI can usually take care of themselves and carry out their normal daily activities.

Mini-Cog®: A brief, cognitive screening test that is frequently used to evaluate cognition in older adults in various settings.

Mini-Mental State Examination (MMSE): A set of 11 questions that doctors and other healthcare professionals commonly use to check for cognitive impairment.

Mixed dementia: A condition in which brain changes of more than one cause of dementia occur simultaneously.

National Family Caregiver Support Program: Provides grants to states and territories to fund various supports that help family and informal caregivers care for older adults in their homes for as long as possible.

Normal pressure hydrocephalus: A brain disorder in which excess cerebrospinal fluid (CSF) accumulates in the brain's ventricles, causing thinking and reasoning problems, difficulty walking, and loss of bladder control.

Nursing home: A place for people who don't need to be in a hospital but can't be cared for at home.

Occupational Therapist (OT): Trained professionals who help people participate in their desired occupations with the therapeutic use of everyday activities, based on the client's personal interests and needs.

Palliative care: Compassionate comfort care that provides relief from the symptoms and physical and mental stress of a serious or life-limiting illness. Palliative care can be pursued at diagnosis, during curative treatment and follow-up, and at the end of life.

Personal Emergency Response System (PERS): Also known as Medical Emergency Response Systems, let you call for help in an emergency by pushing a button. A PERS has 3 components: a small radio transmitter, a console connected to your telephone, and an emergency response center that monitors calls.

Poserior cortical atrophy: Gradual and progressive degeneration of the outer layer of the brain (the cortex) in the part of the brain located in the back of the head (posterior).

Provider Order for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST): A system to elicit patients' preferences regarding medical treatment, and communicate and honor those preferences by creating portable medical orders.

Respite care: Short-term relief for primary caregivers.

Social Worker: A practice-based profession that promotes social change, development, cohesion, and the empowerment of people and communities.

Support groups: A group of people with common experiences or concerns who provide each other with encouragement, comfort, and advice.

Subjective Cognitive Decline (SCD): The self-reported experience of worsening or more frequent confusion or memory loss.

Sundowning: Restlessness, agitation, irritability, or confusion that can begin or worsen as daylight begins to fade.

Traumatic head injury: A form of acquired brain injury that occurs when a sudden trauma causes damage to the brain.

Vascular dementia: A common form of dementia caused by an impaired supply of blood to the brain, such as may be caused by a series of small strokes.

Wandering: A person living with dementia can become lost or confused about their location due to their inability to recognize familiar places and faces, this can happen at any stage of dementia.

Younger-onset dementia: Any dementia that develops in people under the age of 65.

