

Learn the Lingo

Below are a few acronyms and terms you'll want to understand when dealing with Alzheimer's disease and Assisted Living.

ADLs – Activities of Daily Living are daily personal care activities such as eating, bathing, grooming, dressing and using the toilet.

ADS, SDP - Adult day services, Senior Day Program A daytime program for people who can't be left home alone while their caregiver works. Participants socialize and engage in appropriate activities. Some programs offer shower services and doctor check ups.

Advance directive This is a legal document that states the kind of medical treatment a person would like when he or she cannot communicate wishes.

AD - Alzheimer's disease is a progressive and fatal disease caused when nerve cells in the brain degenerate, and brain matter shrinks, causing impaired thinking, behavior and memory.

Aphasia is when someone has difficulty understanding the speech of others and/or expressing their own thoughts verbally.

ALF - Assisted living facility is a residential care community that provides housing, support services and health care for people in the early or middle stages of a disabling disease, such as Alzheimer's disease. 24-hour care usually includes meals, housekeeping and laundry, recreational activities, and local transportation to shopping and appointments. Assistances can include medication reminders, personal care and grooming and more. Residents choose how much assistance they want or need.

Behavioral symptoms In Alzheimer's disease, emotional symptoms, such as wandering, depression, anxiety, hostility and sleep disturbances. Alzheimer's and related dementias can cause a person to act in unpredictable ways. Some people have behaviors such as agitation, repetition, hallucinations and suspicion.

Caregiver is the primary person in charge of caring for someone with Alzheimer's disease. Caregivers can be family members or friends, or paid professional caregivers. Caregivers may provide full- or part-time help to the person with Alzheimer's.

CNA – Certified Nursing Assistant performs everyday living tasks for the sick or elderly. CNAs have a semester or two of training, and work under the supervision of a Registered Nurse.

Cognitive symptoms are the symptoms that relate to loss of thought processes, such as learning, comprehension, memory, reasoning and judgment.

Daily care plan provides structure for the person with Alzheimer's or dementia. A plan should include activities that provide meaning and enjoyment.

Dementia is the loss of thinking, memory and reasoning to the point where it interferes with a person's ability to function. Dementia is not a disease, it is a group of symptoms that accompany certain diseases and conditions. Other symptoms can be changes in personality, mood and behavior. Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of dementia.



More information for Alzheimer's caregivers is available at AlzheimerStories.com

Learn the Lingo

Page 2

DON - Director of Nursing Services The Director of Nursing oversees all nursing activities in a community. The DON is a registered nurse.

DNR - Do Not Resuscitate is a legal order written either in the hospital or on a legal form to respect the wishes of a patient not to undergo CPR or advanced cardiac life support if their heart were to stop, or if they stop breathing.

Durable POA - Durable power of attorney is a legal document that allows an individual to authorize another person to make legal decisions when the person is no longer able to make legal decisions for himself/ herself.

Durable power of attorney for health care is a legal document that allows a person to appoint another person to make all decisions regarding health care, including health care providers, medical treatment and end-of-life decisions.

HIPPA - Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act HIPAA provides national standards to protect the privacy of personal health information.

In-home Care or Home Care includes services where professionals come to the home to help the caregiver and the person with dementia. Services vary, but can include companionship, personal care services and homemaker services.

IADLs - Instrumental activities of daily living Instrumental activities of daily living are important activities, such as cooking, shopping and managing finances.

Living Will is a legal document that expresses an individual's decision on the use of artificial life support systems.

LPN – Licensed Practical Nurse A nurse who cares for sick people. LPNs usually have one year of training and work under a Registered Nurse.

Quality of care is a term used to describe care and services that allow the recipients to attain and maintain their highest level of mental, physical and psychological function in a dignified and caring way.

Respite - Respite Care is temporary relief from caregiving tasks. Respite care can be in-home assistance, a short stay at an assisted living community, or attendance at an adult day program.

MCU - Memory Care Unit A designated area of a residential care facility or nursing home that cares specifically for the needs of people with Alzheimer's disease.

State Survey The state health department makes an unannounced survey of each assisted living community about once a year. This survey helps make sure a facility is giving good care. An ALF must participate to keep its license. Each facility has to post its latest survey results.



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