



VITALITY SENIOR LIVING – SENIOR CARE GLOSSARY

Senior care can be downright confusing. From the different levels of care to the all of the acronyms, it's easy to see how adult children end up feeling baffled and bewildered. We can help you navigate the maze.

In this glossary of terms, we decode the most commonly used senior care acronyms and lingo.

SENIOR CARE GLOSSARY OF TERMS

1. Activities of Daily Living (ADL): You will hear this phrase or its acronym often in senior living communities. It is used to describe the tasks we all complete on a daily basis. There are six basic types of ADLs: bathing, dressing, eating, toileting, continence care, and walking/transferring.

2. Adult Day Services: These care centers offer structured support and enrichment activities for seniors who aren't safe staying alone or who need more opportunities for socialization. They are usually open during traditional business hours when a family caregiver needs to be at work. Adult day centers provide breakfast, lunch, and snacks for clients. Some also help with personal care needs. Many provide assistance with medication management. Programs and activities for clients to participate in are scheduled throughout the day. Most adult day centers offer transportation services to and from a client's home.

3. Aging in Place: You may have heard this term during a conversation with an in-home care agency. It can be used to describe modifying an older adult's home to allow them to stay there longer. The phrase is also used to describe an assisted living community's ability to adapt a resident's environment so they can spend the rest of their life in a single location.





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4. Veterans Aid & Attendance: An often overlooked benefit for veterans and their surviving spouse is Aid & Attendance. It is designed to help when a senior veteran or their spouse require regular “aid and attendance” from another person, when one of them has a vision impairment, or if either spouse is homebound. There are other conditions that must be met, including service during a period of active war or conflict and a financial threshold.

5. Ambulatory/Non-Ambulatory: These terms are used to describe a person’s ability to walk with or without assistance. It is important for senior living communities to have an honest understanding of this as it determines how much care the potential resident might require.

6. Assessment: Before an older adult moves in to a senior living community, a qualified staff member will complete an evaluation of physical health, social abilities, emotional wellness, and mental status. This helps provide caregivers and other support staff with an understanding of the types of care and assistance a new resident will need. These assessments are typically repeated once or twice a year after the senior moves in.

7. Assisted Living (AL): These communities are a professionally managed senior housing option that combines support with independence. Residents typically have a private apartment or suite. Services and amenities include support with personal care, medication management, healthy meals, life enrichment activities, emergency call systems, transportation, and wellness activities.

8. Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC): A CCRC is also known as a retirement community. These campuses provide all levels of senior care in one location. From independent living apartments and villas to assisted living, memory care, and a nursing home, residents can move through the care continuum as their need for care changes.





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9. Independent Living (IL): If a senior is searching for a living option that frees them from household maintenance and repairs while providing a variety of life enrichment programs to participate in, this might be a good fit. Transportation services and meal plans are also included or available in most independent living communities.

10. Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL): These activities are the chores and tasks we each need to be able to do to remain independent. They include managing a check book, paying bills, arranging for transportation, scheduling medical appointments, and preparing meals.

11. Medication Management: Most assisted living and memory care communities offer medication management. In fact, support with managing medication is one of the most commonly utilized services in senior living.

12. Memory Care: This special type of senior housing is designed to meet the unique needs and challenges of seniors with dementia. Memory care is usually part of a senior living campus, but it can sometimes be a standalone community. These programs provide a secure environment to help reduce the safety risks people with dementia often face. The staff receives additional training to learn the best ways to support and communicate with adults who have dementia. Thoughtfully planned life enrichment activities are designed to promote feelings of independence and success by working around any limitations caused by the disease.

13. Nursing Home: If you are searching for senior care for a loved one with more complex medical needs, a nursing home might be the solution. They are home to older adults who need skilled care from licensed professionals (e.g., nurses and respiratory therapists) who are available around the clock. Nursing homes typically offer physical, occupational, and speech therapy services as well.





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14. Person-Centered Care: A philosophy of care that empowers residents in an assisted living community to play an active role in their care and to make their own decisions is known as person-centered care. Residents decide when to get up each day, what time they would like to eat meals, which activities to participate in, and more. Caregivers are viewed as partners who provide the support needed for residents to maintain this level of independence.

15. Respite Care: Short-term care to give weary caregivers a break is also referred to as respite. This type of care can be provided by an in-home care provider or at a senior living community. Some respite guests stay at a community for a week or two, while others might stay for a whole month.

16. Residential Care Homes: These small care homes are known by many names: board and care homes, adult foster care, residential care communities, or personal care homes. They are typically smaller than a senior living community and closely resemble a private home.

17. Skilled Nursing & Rehabilitation Center: If an older adult is hospitalized for an injury, illness, or planned surgery, they might need more rehab before returning home. These short-term rehabilitation centers can be a solution. They bridge the gap between hospital and home.



Still have questions about
a senior care term? *Let us know!*

We'll be happy to decode any senior care lingo you
need help understanding!

