

Tips for Nurses: Aged Care Access and Assessment



What it is: The aged care system provides support for older Australians living in their own home or residential aged care. Access to government-funded aged care requires an assessment of the person's needs. The older person is asked questions about what they would like help with to keep them as independent as possible, safe, and connected with their community. This is used to make a recommendation for the type and level of care that will best meet the needs of older Australians with low to complex needs.

This includes access to the following government-funded services:

- home care support and packages
- residential aged care
- transition care
- respite care
- short-term restorative care.

Why it matters: Sometimes care decisions and expectations about who will provide what care can be a source of worry for the person. It might also result in arguments in the family or with care providers. Understanding how access to aged care including assessment works means that you can better support clients and residents to navigate the system to receive the care they need. It can also help to manage expectations related to care.

What I need to know: Aged care assessment has a focus on client needs. It also aims to support wellness and reablement where appropriate. The amount of funding provided depends on the level of care approved. This will affect the type and amount of care provided.

Following approval and allocation of funds, the aim is to arrange services according to the person's needs and what is important to them. My Aged Care should be referred to for any questions relating to assessment or eligibility for government-funded services.

An older person or their representative can register with My Aged Care for an assessment, or they can be referred by a health professional. Assessment can take place at the older person's home, or in a hospital. There is a process in place for review of the assessment outcome if requested.

If you care for a client who requires more support than their current package allows, they can apply through My Aged Care to be reassessed.

Actions

If clients or families have any questions about access to aged care, refer them to your supervisor and/or My Aged Care.

Speak with your supervisor to arrange a case conference if you notice increasing care needs.

Anyone with consent can register an older person with My Aged Care for screening. They can also be referred from a hospital, or by a GP or other health professional with patient consent.

Tools

MyAgedCare website www.myagedcare.gov.au

palliAGED has information on access to aged care for older Australians www.palliAGED.com.au

Name:

My reflections:

How many aged care assessments of my clients or residents have I read?

In my organisation where are records of aged care assessments filed?

My notes:

See related palliAGED Practice
Tip Sheets:
Advance Care Planning
Frailty
Palliative Care

For references and the latest version of all the Tip Sheets visit
www.palliaged.com.au/Practice-Centre/For-Nurses

CareSearch is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care