

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 starts with an assessment through My Aged Care of the person's eligibility and 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.

The Single Assessment System provides a single pathway to access all government-funded care. From 1 November 2025 this now includes the Support at Home Program (replacing Home Care Packages and the Short-Term Restorative Care Program), residential aged care and transition care.

Why it matters: Seeking aged care support can be emotionally challenging and difficult. Decisions about care can cause stress and conflict, both for the older person and their family. It could also result in conflict within the family or with care providers. Understanding the access and assessment process can help families navigate the system, support informed decisions, and manage expectations about what care will be provided and by whom.

What I need to know: Aged care assessment has a focus on the older person's needs. It helps determine what level of care and support they need, as well as the specific types of services best suited to them. The assessment is free of charge.

If the older person is eligible for aged care services, an assessor will work with them to

develop a care plan. This plan is tailored to their specific needs and will outline the services to be provided – whether in their home, respite care, or residential care.

While the government will continue to fund most of aged care costs, people who can afford to will make a co-contribution to their aged care costs. The government will continue to fully fund clinical care services in both aged care homes and the Support at Home program.

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.

Name: _____

My reflections:

What information in the aged care assessment could be useful to know when caring for the person?

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

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