

FRONT RANGE NURSE AIDE TRAINING PROGRAM

Compiled Glossary of Common Medical Terms & Definitions for Student Nurse Aides

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This document is intended for educational use only and is an "in-progress" work that is continually being up-dated with new additions, replacement with better definitions, and modification through editing. It is not intended to be a comprehensive glossary, but rather, an educational tool for the Front Range Nurse Aide Training Program which may also be useful for other student nurse aides who may encounter these terms through testing or while in clinical. In addition to standard terms, many of the entries pertain to long-term care, to nursing degrees, and to medical organizations. The list represents a compilation of definitions derived from many sources, including the internet. A good number of the definitions were written by Nurse Nancy LLC. A master "cross reference" list is maintained by Nurse Nancy LLC that indicates the source of each definition, but is not provided here because we are continually "upgrading" definitions which often changes the source. However, a listing of sources is provided at the end of the glossary. Use this document with your own judgment and at your own risk.

NOTE: Words listed without definition are being updated for the next edition.

A

Abandonment

When a health care professional (usually a physician, nurse, dentist, or paramedic) has already begun emergency treatment of a patient and then suddenly walks away while the patient is still in need, without securing the services of an adequate substitute, or giving the patient adequate opportunity to find one. It is a crime and can result in the loss of one's license to practice. Also, because of the public policy in favor of keeping people alive, the professional cannot defend himself or herself by pointing to the patient's inability to pay for services, the possibility of exposure to malpractice liability beyond one's insurance coverage.

Abdominal Thrust

The Heimlich Maneuver; a controversial first aid procedure for clearing an obstructed airway. Using the hands, exert pressure on the bottom of the diaphragm. This compresses the lungs and exerts pressure on any object lodged in the trachea, hopefully expelling it.

Abduction

The movement of a limb away from the midline of the body. Abduction of both legs spreads the legs. It is the opposite of adduction.

Absorption

Entry and retention of a fluid (such as water) into another mass or a solid material by virtue of the porosity or capillary action. A sponge facilitates absorption.

Accessibility

As required by the Americans with Disabilities Act, removal of barriers that would hinder a person with a disability from entering, functioning, and working within a facility. Required restructuring of the facility cannot cause undue hardship for the employer.

Accident

A mishap; especially one causing injury or death. Anything that happens by chance without an apparent cause. Any unforeseen, unintended, and unexpected event or occurrence which results in personal injury, disease, death, or property damage.

Accreditation

A process whereby a program of study or an institution is recognized by an external body as meeting certain predetermined standards. For facilities, accreditation standards are usually defined in terms of physical plant, governing body, administration, and medical and other staff. Accreditation is often carried out by organizations created for the purpose of assuring the public of the quality of the accredited institution or program. The state or federal governments can recognize accreditation in lieu of, or as the basis for licensure or other mandatory approvals. Public or private payment programs often require accreditation as a condition of payment for covered services. Accreditation may either be permanent or may be given for a specified period of time.

Acceptance

The fifth and final stage in the Kubler-Ross Theory of the dying process wherein the person realizes that death is inevitable and can not be avoided.

Activities of Daily Living (ADLs)

Basic personal activities which include bathing, eating, dressing, mobility, transferring from bed to chair, and using the toilet. ADLs are used to measure how dependent a person may be on requiring assistance in performing any or all of these activities. They are descriptions of physical functions which are useful tools when planning helping services for older persons.

Activity

Generally the smallest unit of work identified in a work plan or care plan. A set of tasks related either by topic, dependencies, data, common skills, or deliverables. A short-term action that, in combination with other activities, will lead to achieving a goal or objective. Multiple activities can collectively form a phase or a process or a plan.

Acute

The rapid onset and short but severe course of an extremely sharp or intense pain ("acute pain").

Acute Care

Care that is generally provided for a short period of time to treat a certain illness or condition. This type of care can include short-term hospital stays, doctor's visits, surgery, and X-rays.

Acute Illness

Illness that is usually short-term and that often comes on quickly.

Adduction

Movement of a limb toward the midline of the body. It is the opposite of abduction.

ADLs

See "Activities of Daily Living"

Administrator

The person in charge of the administrative operations for a facility, including oversight management of business, financial, marketing, sales, personnel, housekeeping and most technical services.

Admission

A formal process of permitting a person entry into a particular program or institution, including the determination that the person meets set requirements and completes the necessary forms. Specific procedures may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

Admitting Resident

The process of granting a person entry into a particular long term care facility or nursing home, including the determination that the person meets set requirements and completes the necessary forms.

Adult Care Home

(Also called board and care home or group home.) Residence which offers housing and personal care services for 3 to 16 residents. Services (such as meals, supervision, and transportation) are usually provided by the owner or manager. May be single family home. (Licensed as adult family home or adult group home.)

Adult Day Care

A daytime community-based program for functionally impaired adults that provides a variety of health, social, and related support services in a protective setting.

Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN)

An Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN) is a registered nurse qualified for independent practice. The APRN has a Master's degree or a Doctoral degree in Nursing. An APRN who completes two years supervised practice and a written examination by the American Nurses Association is designated as a Certified Specialist (CS).

Affected Side

Also called the weak side, weaker or involved side. The side of a body that has become weakened as a result of a stroke or injury.

Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA)

A 1967 federal law that prohibits employers with 20 or more employees from discriminating on the basis of age in hiring, job retention, compensation, and benefits. ADEA also sets requirements for the duration of employer-provided disability benefits.

Aging Process

A somewhat normal pattern of age related physical and mental changes that all humans go through as they grow older.

AIDS

Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome or Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. A disease characterized by the destruction of the human immune system.

Airway

The parts of the body involved in moving air into the lungs. In particular, the tube that connects the mouth to the lungs - the pharynx and bronchi. The parts of the respiratory system through which air flows between the external environment and the alveoli.

Alarms

A device that signals the occurrence of some undesirable event; a visible or audible signal that an undesirable event is happening or about to happen.

Alzheimer's Disease

A progressive, irreversible disease characterized by degeneration of the brain cells and severe loss of memory, causing the individual to become dysfunctional and dependent upon others for basic living needs. Specific procedures for dealing with such a resident may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

Ambulation

Ability to move about and walk from place to place; to move from place to place.

Ambulation with Assistance

The ability to move about and walk from place to place when assisted by another person or by a mechanical device.

Ambulatory Care

All types of health services which are provided on an outpatient basis, in contrast to services provided in the home or to persons who are inpatients. While many inpatients may be ambulatory, the term ambulatory care usually implies that the patient must travel to a location to receive services which do not require an overnight stay.

Ambulatory Resident

A patient or resident that is able to move from place to place without assistive devices; able to walk, hence referring to a person who is not confined to a bed or wheelchair.

Amputation

The removal of a body extremity by trauma or surgery. As a surgical measure, it is used to control pain or a disease process in the affected limb, such as malignancy or gangrene. In some cases, it is carried out on individuals as a preventative surgery for such problems.

Amputee

A person who has had one or more digits (fingers or toes) or limbs (arms or legs) removed by amputation.

Anaphia

The inability to feel touch.

Anemia

Having less than the normal number of red blood cells or less hemoglobin than normal in the blood.

Anemia

A lower than normal number of red blood cells or having too few red blood cells. Symptoms of anemia include feeling tired, weak, and short of breath.

Anger

A negative emotional reaction associated with other bad feelings such as fear, disgust, shame, irritability, outrage, hostility and possibly even violence. Actions resulting from anger often have negative consequences, because the neurotransmitters/hormones (e.g. adrenaline) released during anger intensify impulsive action and cloud rational thought processes. Anger is also the second stage in the Kubler-Ross Theory of the dying process wherein an anger at God and an anger at others may be present.

Angina Pectoris

Chest pain that is typically severe and crushing with a feeling just behind the breastbone (the sternum) of pressure and suffocation, due to an inadequate supply of oxygen to the heart muscle.

Angry Resident

A resident in a long term care facility or nursing home that is angry or upset about a situation, a person, an object or an event. Specific procedures for dealing with such a resident may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

Anterior

Situated toward the front of the body; relating to or situated near the head.

Antibacterial

Anything that destroys bacteria or suppresses their growth or their ability to reproduce. Heat, chemicals such as chlorine, and antibiotic drugs all have antibacterial properties.

Antibiotic

Substances produced by living organisms, such as molds, which inhibit the growth or reproduction of other bacteria or kill them. A drug used to treat infections caused by bacteria and other microorganisms.

Antimicrobial

An agent that kills bacteria or suppresses their multiplication or growth, including antibiotics and synthetic agents.

Anxiety

The feeling of fear, apprehension and worry often accompanied by physical sensations such as palpitations, chest pain and/or shortness of breath. It may exist as a primary brain disorder or may be associated with other medical problems including other psychiatric disorders.

Aphasia

Loss or impairment of the ability to use or comprehend words, usually from brain damage.

Apical

The adjective for apex, the tip of a pyramidal or rounded structure, like the lung or the heart. For example, an apical lung tumor is a tumor located at the top of the lung.

Apical Pulse

A pulse obtained from the lower half of the heart, between the breast bone and the left nipple, A stethoscope is usually needed to get a clear sound.

Apnea

The absence of breathing; a period of time during which breathing stops or is markedly reduced. There are two types of apneas, the more common obstructive sleep apnea and the less common central sleep apnea.

Appropriate Response

The expected mental, verbal or physical response that is given by a patient or resident in response to another action or query; the response that would be expected from most patients or residents.

Area Agencies on Aging (AAA)

The national network of senior service providers funded by Title III of the Older Americans Act (OAA) in 1965. They are administered through State and local government by the Administration on Aging. The Area Agency on Aging serves the needs of persons 60 years and older.

Arteries

Muscular blood vessels that carry blood away from the heart. They are contrasted with veins, which carry blood toward the heart.

Arthritis

A joint disorder featuring inflammation that is classified as one of the rheumatic diseases.. Arthritis is frequently accompanied by joint pain. Joint pain is referred to as arthralgia. There are many forms of arthritis (over one hundred and growing). The forms range from those related to wear and tear of cartilage (such as osteoarthritis) to those associated with inflammation resulting from an over-active immune system (such as rheumatoid arthritis). The causes of arthritis depend on the form of arthritis.

Aseptic

Preventing infection; free or freed from pathogenic microorganisms (see medical asepsis).

Aspiration

The act of breathing and especially breathing in; a drawing of something in, out, up or through as by suction.

Assisted Living

Residences that provide a "home with services" and that emphasize residents' privacy and choice. Residents typically have private locking rooms (only shared by choice) and bathrooms. Personal care services are available on a 24-hour-a-day basis. (Licensed as residential care facilities or as rest homes.)

Assistive Devices

Tools that enable individuals with disabilities to perform essential job functions, e.g., telephone headsets, adapted computer keyboards, enhanced computer monitors.

Asthma

A common disorder in which chronic inflammation of the bronchial tubes (bronchi) makes them swell, narrowing the airways. Asthma involves only the bronchial tubes and does not affect the air sacs (alveoli) or the lung tissue (the parenchyma of the lung) itself.

Atrophy

Decrease in size or wasting away of a body part or tissue; arrested development of a body part or organ.

Attitudes

The manner in which a person thinks, behaves, feels and acts about a person, place or thing; the manner in which a person reacts to a situation or stimuli. Attitude is often expressed through the use of body language, mumbling, dress and even personal adornment (tattoos and jewelry) as well as other unspoken means of conveying a belief or message. Attitudes can also be expressed verbally as defiance or as joy and jubilation.

Autoclave

A medical sterilization device used to expose items to steam at a high pressure within a closed chamber in order to decontaminate the materials or render them sterile by killing-off organisms.

Avoiding Falls

Precautions that can be taken by a medical facility, members of a medical team, and by a resident or patient to avoid injuries or falls.

Axillary Temperature

The body temperature derived from the armpit. An armpit (axillary) temperature is usually 0.5°F (0.3°C) to 1°F (0.6°C) lower than an oral temperature.

B**Back Strain**

A muscle strain or ligament sprain generally occurring in the lower back when the muscle fibers are abnormally stretched or torn. A lumbar sprain occurs when the ligaments, the tough bands of tissue that hold bones together, are torn from their attachments. Differentiating a strain from a sprain can be difficult, as both injuries will show similar symptoms.

Backache

A pain or soreness along the spinal cord in the back; pain within the muscles of the back caused by over extension or stress.

Bacteria

Any of a large group of microscopic organisms that live in soil, water, plants, organic matter, or the live bodies of animals or people. Bacteria are single-celled organisms that live in and around us. Bacteria may be helpful, but in certain conditions may cause illnesses such as strep throat, most ear infections, and bacterial pneumonia.

Bargaining

The process of face-to-face meetings that include an exchange of ideas and proposals plus some give and take (compromise) that produces an agreement between the parties involved. Bargaining is also the third stage in the Kubler-Ross Theory of the dying process wherein the person attempts to bargain with God to possibly delay or avoid pending death.

Barrier

Any device used to shield or prohibit a person, object or substance from coming in contact with another person, object or substance; to prevent contact between two objects by using a third object that is placed between them. Towels, chucks, masks, gowns, gloves, blankets, etc. are all types of barriers. Specific procedures may vary, depending on the policies defined be each facility.

Basic Human Needs

Security, Adventure, Freedom, Exchange, Power, Expansion, Acceptance, Community, Expression.

Basic Skin Care

A nursing skill involving appropriate techniques to keep a patient or residents skin in a clean and healthy condition, free from disease or infections.

Bathing

A nursing skill involving appropriate techniques of washing all or parts of a patient or residents body with soap and water for the purpose of cleaning those body parts. Specific procedures may vary, depending on the policies defined be each facility.

Bed Bath

A nursing skill involving appropriate techniques of washing all or parts of a patient or residents body with soap and water (for the purpose of cleaning those body parts) while they are still laying in the bed. Specific procedures may vary, depending on the policies defined be each facility.

Bed Height

In reference to an adjustable hospital or geriatric bed, the height of the sleeping platform above the floor, as determined by an electric or manual adjustment.

Bed Pan (bedpan)

A shallow oblong bowl shaped vessel used by a bedridden patient for defecation and urination by placing the pan underneath the person. Usually made from stainless steel or plastic.

Bed Position

In reference to an adjustable hospital or geriatric bed, the position of the head or base of the sleeping platform as determined by an electric or manual adjustment.

Bed Rest

Confinement to a bed continuously, or for a set period of time. An implication that a person needs additional sleep and/or relaxation of the body (as in the case of some sick or injured persons).

Bed Sore

A pressure and/or friction induced ulceration, blistering or breaking of the skin that can afflict persons confined to a bed for long periods of time. See decubitus ulcer.

Behavioral Care Plan

A medical care program intended to maintain, control or improve a person's demeanor, mental well being and/or physical abilities. May be integrated as a component of their overall care plan.

Biohazard

A biological hazard or biohazard is an organism, or substance derived from an organism, that poses a threat to (primarily) human health. This can include medical waste, samples of a microorganism, virus or toxin (from a biological source) that can impact human health. It can also include substances harmful to animals. The term and its associated symbol is generally used as a warning, so that those potentially exposed to the substances will know to take precautions.

Biohazard Bag

A special containment bag that is well marked and often colored red, orange or yellow within which medical waste and disposable medical tools are discarded. The associated symbol is generally used as a warning, so that those potentially exposed to the substances will know to take precautions.

Bladder Training

A behavioral technique that teaches the patient to resist or inhibit the urge to urinate, and to urinate according to a schedule rather than urinating at the urge.

Bleeding

The loss of blood from the body. The flow of blood from ruptured blood vessels.

Blindness

The state of being blind or lacking sight. Legal blindness is corrected visual acuity of 20/200 or less, or corrected visual field to 20 degrees or less, in the better seeing eye.

Blood Pressure

The pressure exerted by the blood on the walls of the blood vessels. Unless indicated otherwise, blood pressure refers to systemic arterial blood pressure, i.e., the pressure in the large arteries delivering blood to body parts other than the lungs, such as the brachial artery (in the arm). The pressure of the blood in other vessels is lower than the arterial pressure. Blood pressure values are universally stated in millimetres of mercury (mmHg). The systolic pressure is defined as the peak pressure in the arteries during the cardiac cycle; the diastolic pressure is the lowest pressure (at the resting phase of the cardiac cycle). The mean arterial pressure and pulse pressure are other important quantities. Typical values for a resting, healthy adult human are approximately 120 mmHg systolic and 80 mmHg diastolic (written as 120/80 mmHg), with large individual variations. These measures of blood pressure are not static, but undergo natural variations from one heartbeat to another or throughout the day (in a circadian rhythm); they also change in response to stress, nutritional factors, drugs, or disease.

Board and Care Home

(Also called adult care home or group home.) Residence which offers housing and personal care services for 3 to 16 residents. Services (such as meals, supervision, and transportation) are usually provided by the owner or manager. May be single family home. (Licensed as adult family home or adult group home.)

Body Alignment

How the torso, limbs, spine, shoulders are all in proper alignment. i.e. ear over the shoulder over the hips or the knee over the ankle. The dynamic and proper placement of the bones so that the muscle system does less work.

Body Fluids

Fluids that are excreted or secreted from the body as well as fluids that normally are not. These may include Amniotic fluid, Aqueous humour, Bile, Blood and blood plasma, Cerumen also known as earwax, Cowper's fluid or pre-ejaculatory fluid, Chyle, Chyme, Female ejaculate, Interstitial fluid, Lymph, Menses, Breast milk, Mucus (including snot and phlegm), Pleural fluid, Pus, Saliva, Sebum (skin oil), Semen, Serum, Sweat, Tears, Urine, Vaginal lubrication, and Vomit.

Body Heat

The warmth and heat generated and radiated by the body; the ability to keep the body temperature within certain boundaries, even when surrounding temperatures are very different.

Body Language

The gestures, poses, movements, and expressions that a person uses to communicate; the use of facial expressions, gestures and physical orientation to express a message.

Body Mechanics

Use of the body in an efficient and bio-mechanically correct way, both in daily life activities and to prevent and correct problems related to posture.

Body Temperature

The temperature of the body; normally 98.6 F or 37 C in humans; usually measured to obtain a quick evaluation of a person's health.

Bowel and Bladder Programs

A medical program intended to improve a person's control of their own bladder and waste production/elimination. May be integrated as a component of their overall care plan.

Bowel Movement

When body waste (feces) is discharged from the rectum and anus.

Brachial Pulse

Pulse obtained from inside the elbow on the little finger side.

Break Time

A designated time slot for an employee to stop working (take a break from work) and relax, often lasting for only 5 to 15 minutes; free time.

Breathing

The bodily process of inhalation and exhalation; the process of taking in oxygen from inhaled air and releasing carbon dioxide by exhalation

Broken Equipment

Equipment that not longer functions as it was designed to and is therefore not capable of performing its intended task. Broken equipment may pose a potential liability to the user and the facility.

Burnout

Exhaustion of physical, mental or emotional strength usually due to stress, frustration or over-working.

Burns

The damaging of skin cells as a result of contact with fire, heat, electricity, chemicals, radiation, ice or any energy produced by friction or temperature. May also be a process wherein calories and fat are consumed as energy during exercise.

C**Caduceus**

The common symbol of medicine consisting of two serpents entwined around the staff of Asklepios, the ancient Greco-Roman god of medicine (Latin, Aesculapius) which is set against a pair of wings that presumably represent the ancient "caduceus" staff carried by the Greco-Roman god Hermes (Latin, Mercury). Interestingly, most Europeans use only a single serpent in their medical symbol whereas in the United States, the symbol exhibits a double serpent entwined around the staff of

Asklepios. This American caduceus was initially a mark used by a 19th century printer of medical books and only became a popular medical symbol after its adoption by the U.S. Army Medical Corps at the beginning of the 20th century.

Call Light

A signaling device positioned on/near the resident's bed that allows the patient to voluntarily push a button or switch that then notifies the nursing team elsewhere in the facility that the patient is in need of assistance.

Cane

A hand-held orthopedic device that functions as an extra leg, thereby providing greater stability to a person when they move, walk or stand at rest.

Cancer

A general term for about 100 diseases characterized by uncontrolled, abnormal growth of cells. The resulting mass, or tumor, can invade and destroy surrounding normal tissues. Cancer cells from the tumor can spread through the blood or lymph (the clear fluid that bathes body cells) to start new cancers in other parts of the body (metastases).

Capitation

A method of payment for health services in which the provider is paid a fixed amount for each patient without regard to the actual number or nature of services provided. Capitation payments are characteristic of health maintenance organizations (HMOs). Also, a method of public support of health professional schools in which eligible schools receive a fixed grant for each student enrolled.

Cardiac Arrest

A medical emergency with absent or inadequate contraction of the left ventricle of the heart that immediately causes body wide circulatory failure. The signs and symptoms include loss of consciousness; rapid shallow breathing progressing to apnea (absence of breathing); profoundly low blood pressure (hypotension) with no pulses that can be felt over major arteries; and no heart sounds.

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)

The emergency substitution of heart and lung action to restore life to someone who appears dead. The two main components of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) are chest compression to make the heart pump and mouth-to-mouth ventilation to breath for the victim.

Cardiovascular System

The circulatory system which comprises the heart and blood vessels. The system carries nutrients and oxygen to the tissues of the body and removes carbon dioxide and other wastes from them.

Care Plan

(Also called service plan or treatment plan.) A written document which outlines the types and frequency of the long-term care services that a consumer receives. It may include treatment goals for him or her for a specified time period.

Caregiver

Person who provides support and assistance with various activities to a family member, friend, or neighbor. May provide emotional or financial support, as well as hands-on help with different tasks. Caregiving may also be done from long distance.

Care/Case Management

Offers a single point of entry to the aging services network. Care/case management assess clients' needs, create service plans, and coordinate and monitor services; they may operate privately or may be employed by social service agencies or public programs. Typically case managers are nurses or social workers.

CareTracker

A wall mounted computer digital display and data input system designed by Resource Systems that allows members of a medical team to input, update, query and track specific data about specific patients or residents.

Caring for the Elderly

A form of medical health care that specializes in providing services, care and nursing assistance specially designed for helping elderly people; In long term care, specific policies, procedures and legal regulations define what and how these services and assistance should be provided.

Carotid Pulse

Pulse obtained from either side of the neck, just under lower jaw.

Case Mix

A method by which a health care provider measures the service needs of the patient population, and may be based on age, medical diagnosis, severity of illness, or length of stay. A nursing home or hospital's actual case mix influences cost and scope of the services provided by the facility to the patient, and case mix reimbursement systems adjust payment rates accordingly.

Cast

A shell, frequently made from plaster, encasing a limb (or, in some cases, large portions of the body) to hold a broken bone (or bones) in place until it has healed.

Cataracts

A clouding of the natural lens of the eye, the part of the eye responsible for focusing light and producing clear, sharp images. The lens is contained in a sealed bag or capsule. As old cells die they become trapped within the capsule. Over time, the cells accumulate causing the lens to cloud, making images look blurred or fuzzy.

Catheter

A thin, flexible tube. For example, a catheter placed in a vein provides a pathway for giving drugs, nutrients, fluids, or blood products. Samples of blood can also be withdrawn through the catheter.

Catheter Care

The appropriate and proper medical process and procedures used to place, manage, monitor and remove a catheter. Specific procedures may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

Catheter Drainage Bag

A bag used to collect the drainage of body fluids such as a Foley catheter bag.

Catheter Foley

A flexible plastic tube (a catheter) inserted into the bladder to provide continuous urinary drainage. The "Foley" has a balloon on the bladder end. After the catheter is inserted in the bladder, the balloon is inflated (with air or fluid) so that the catheter cannot pull out but is retained in the bladder as an "indwelling" catheter. Removal is accomplished simply by deflating the balloon and slipping the catheter out.

CDC

US Dept. of Health and Human Services, Center for Disease Control & Prevention.

Center for Disease Control & Prevention

US Dept. of Health and Human Services, Center for Disease Control & Prevention.

Central Nervous System

That part of the nervous system that consists of the brain and spinal cord. The central nervous system (CNS) is one of the two major divisions of the nervous system. The other is the peripheral nervous system (PNS), that part of the nervous system that lies outside the brain and spinal cord.

Cerebral Cortex

A thin mantle of gray matter about the size of a formal dinner napkin covering the surface of each cerebral hemisphere. The cerebral cortex is crumpled and folded, forming numerous convolutions (gyri) and crevices (sulci). It is made up of six layers of nerve cells and the nerve pathways that connect them. The cerebral cortex is responsible for the processes of thought, perception and memory and serves as the seat of advanced motor function, social abilities, language, and problem solving.

Cerebral Vascular

Pertaining to the blood vessels and, especially, the arteries that supply the brain; as in cerebrovascular accident or cerebrovascular disease.

Cerebral Vascular Accident (CVA)

The sudden death of some brain cells due to lack of oxygen when the blood flow to the brain is impaired by blockage or rupture of an artery to the brain. A CVA is also referred to as a stroke.

Certificate of Need (CON)

A certificate issued by a government body to a health care provider who is proposing to construct, modify, or expand facilities, or to offer new or different types of health services. CON is intended to prevent duplication of services and overbedding. The certificate signifies that the change has been approved.

Certified Financial Planner (CFP)

Certified Financial Planner (CFP) is a professional designation for financial planning professionals who have successfully passed a five-part examination covering insurance, investments, taxes, and estate and retirement planning. The CFP is certified by the Certified Financial Planner Board of standards.

Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA)

Certified Nursing Assistants (CNA) provide bedside patient-care under the direction of Licensed Vocational Nurses and Registered Nurses. The CNA usually assists older adults in Activities of Daily Living. They may be employed by State nursing facilities.

Certified Public Accountant (CPA)

A Certified Public Accountant (CPA) is a professional designation for accounting professionals who have successfully passed a four-part examination covering taxes, auditing and financial reporting.

Charge Nurse

Usually an RN, the charge nurse oversees patient/resident care for an entire shift, including all nursing personnel working with those patients/residents.

Chart

A written or electronic form that is used to record observations, diagnoses, progress, results and recommendations in a standardized manner. A series of charts represent a complete record.

Charting

The process of filling-out a written or electronic form in order to record observations, diagnoses, progress, results or recommendations in a standardized manner that contributes to a complete record. Specific may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

Chemical Dependency

Chemical dependency is a maladaptive pattern of substance abuse (i.e., alcohol; prescriptive or street drugs) that negatively affects an individual cognitively, behaviorally, and/or physically. The individual continues abuse of the chemical, despite adverse life problems.

Chemical Disinfectants

Chlorine-based, iodine-based, peroxygen, aldehydes, sodium hydroxide, Quaternary Ammonium Disinfectant (QAC), chlorhexidine, phenolics to name just a few.

Chemotherapy

Drug therapy for cancer. Also called "chemo" for short; a chemical that binds to and specifically kills microbes or tumor cells.

Chest Pain

Pain in the chest at the point where the ribs meet the chest bone. Chest pain is a symptom of a number of serious conditions and is generally considered a medical emergency, unless the patient is a known angina pectoris sufferer and the symptoms are familiar.

Choking

When a foreign object becomes lodged in the throat or windpipe, blocking the flow of air. In adults, a piece of food often is the culprit. Young children often swallow small objects. The universal sign for choking is hands clutched to the throat. If choking is occurring, begin to perform the Heimlich maneuver. If you're the only rescuer, perform the Heimlich maneuver.

Chore Services

Help with chores such as repairs, yard work, and heavy housecleaning. Specific procedures may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

Chronic

A disease that is long-lasting or recurrent. The term chronic describes the course of the disease, or its rate of onset and development. A chronic course is distinguished from a recurrent course; recurrent diseases relapse repeatedly, with periods of remission in between. As an adjective, chronic can refer to a persistent and lasting medical condition. Chronicity is usually applied to a condition that lasts more than three months.

Chronic Care

Care and treatment given to individuals whose health problems are of a long-term and continuing nature. Rehabilitation facilities, nursing homes, and mental hospitals may be considered chronic care facilities.

Chronic Illness

Long-term or permanent illness (e.g., diabetes, arthritis) which often results in some type of disability and which may require a person to seek help with various activities.

Circulation

The flow of blood through the body's blood vessels and heart.

Circulatory System

The system that moves blood throughout the body. The circulatory system is composed of the heart, arteries, capillaries, and veins.

Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Uniformed Services (CHAMPUS)

A Department of Defense program supporting private sector care for military dependents.

Cleaning Spills

The action of safely removing and properly disposing of unwanted, slippery, infectious, contaminated or hazardous fluids, objects and foods that have spilled as a result of an accident, unintentional activity or because of unavoidable splashing associated with an intentional activity such as surgery, wound care or toileting. Cleaning spills is a key component of medical asepsis and often requires use of personal protective equipment. Specific procedures may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

Clear Liquid Diet

A diet that is a temporary diet used in preparation for surgery and medical tests such as sigmoidoscopy, colonoscopy, and other x-rays or tests that require little food in the stomach and intestines, or, used when someone has been unable to eat any food for several days or after surgery.

Clergy

Priests, deacons, bishops or ministers who have been ordained into a specific religious denomination.

Code-of-Ethics

An organized group of ethical behavior rules and guidelines, which govern the day-to-day activities of a profession or organization.

Co-Insurance

(Also called co-payment.) The specified portion (dollar amount or percentage) that Medicare, health insurance, or a service program may require a person to pay toward his or her medical bills or services.

Co-Payment

(Also called co-insurance.) The specified portion (dollar amount or percentage) that Medicare, health insurance, or a service program may require a person to pay toward his or her medical bills or services.

Cognitive Impairment

Deterioration or loss of intellectual capacity which requires continual supervision to protect the insured or others, as measured by clinical evidence and standardized tests that reliably measure impairment in the area of (1) short or long-term memory, (2) orientation as to person, place and time, or (3) deductive or abstract reasoning. Such loss in intellectual capacity can result from Alzheimer's disease or similar forms of senility or Irreversible Dementia.

Cold Compress

Also known as a "cold pack", a cold compress is used for a short period of time to reduce swelling and bruising by placing over the wound or injury site. Available in many different designs, construction usually consist of a cold or frozen material that is wrapped in cloth to prevent direct contact of the cold/frozen material against the skin.

Colostomy

Surgical formation of an artificial anus by connecting the colon to an opening in the abdominal wall.

Colostomy Bag

An external disposable bag used to catch and contain feces and fluids produced by an artificial anus that connects the colon to an opening in the abdominal wall.

Combative Resident

A resident in a long term care facility or nursing home that is very angry, defiant and capable of becoming violent due to an upsetting situation, person, object or an event. Specific procedures for dealing with such a resident may vary, depending on the policies defined be each facility.

Communicable

A germ or virus that is spread from one carrier or infected person to another; a disease that is able to be passed from one person to another.

Communicable Disease

A disease carrying germ or virus that is capable of being spread from one infected person to another.

Communication

The exchange of information between two or more people or points.

Community Health Center

(Also called neighborhood health center.) An ambulatory health care program usually serving a catchment area which has scarce or nonexistent health services or a population with special health needs. These centers attempt to coordinate federal, state, and local resources in a single organization capable of delivering both health and related social services to a defined population. While such a center may not directly provide all types of health care, it usually takes responsibility to arrange all medical services needed by its patient population.

Community-Based Services

services designed to help older people remain independent and in their own homes; can include senior centers, transportation, delivered meals or congregate meals site, visiting nurses or home health aides, adult day care, and homemaker services.

Compound Fracture

A complicated fracture in which the broken bones pierce the skin.

Conditions of Participation (COP)

Standards a facility or supplier of services, desiring to participate in the Medicare or Medicaid program, is required to meet. These conditions include meeting a statutory definition of the particular institution or facility, conforming with state and local laws and having an acceptable utilization review plan. Surveys to determine whether facilities meet conditions of participation are made by the appropriate state health agency.

Confidential Information

Private and/or personal information that should not be shared with others; information given in confidence or in secret; to be shared only with those whose official capacity dictates their absolute need to know, or by order of a court. Specific procedures for dealing with such may vary, depending on the policies defined be each facility. Confidential information is a recognized legal right of residents and patients.

Confidentiality

A key nursing skill wherein the nurse maintains private and/or personal information that should not be shared with others; ensuring that information is accessible only to those authorized to have access.

Confused Resident

A patient or resident that has some degree of confusion pertaining to one or more of the concepts of "who, what, how, when or where".

Congestive Heart Failure (CHF)

Heart failure caused by loss of pumping power by the heart, resulting in fluids collecting in the body. A condition in which the heart cannot pump out all of the blood that enters it, which leads to an accumulation of blood in the vessels and fluid in the body tissues.

Congregate Housing

Individual apartments in which residents may receive some services, such as a daily meal with other tenants. (Other services may be included as well.) Buildings usually have some common areas such as a dining room and lounge as well as additional safety measures such as emergency call buttons. May be rent-subsidized (known as Section 8 housing).

Congregate Meals

Congregate meals are inexpensive, nutritious meals provided in a communal setting (i.e., in Senior Centers, housing projects, synagogues, and churches).

Constipation

Infrequent (and frequently incomplete) bowel movements. The opposite of diarrhea, constipation is commonly caused by irritable bowel syndrome, diverticulosis, and medications (constipation can paradoxically be caused by overuse of laxatives).

Constricted Blood Vessels

Blocked or partially blocked blood vessels that decrease the flow of blood (blood circulation) within all or parts of the body.

Contact Isolation

Designed to prevent transmission of highly transmissible or epidemiologically important infections that do not warrant strict isolation. All diseases included in this category are spread primarily by close or direct contact such as HSV and respiratory infections in infants and young children. Private room is indicated although patients infected with the same organism may share a room. Masks are indicated for those who come close to the patient. Gowns are indicated if soiling is likely. Gloves are indicated for touching infective material. Hands must be washed after touching the patient or potentially contaminated articles and before taking care of another patient. Articles contaminated with infective material should be discarded or bagged and labeled.

Contagious

Easily spread from one person to another or from one part of the body to another.; able to be spread from person to person or living object to nonliving object to living object (such as person to doorknob to person).

Contagious Disease

Any disease that can easily be spread from one person to another, from one part of the body to another, or from a person to a nonliving object and then to another person (such as person to doorknob to person).

Contaminated Hands

Hands that have come in contact with, or been exposed to, contagious, potentially contagious, toxic or hazardous substances or organisms, and which, retain the ability to spread the substances or organisms to another person, object or body part.

Contamination

To make impure, infected, corrupt, etc., by contact with or addition of something; to pollute something. When a foreign material invades another material, either intentionally, by accident, or as a consequence of another set of actions. Cross contamination is where someone or something that is already contaminated transfers the contamination to another person or object.

Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC)

communities which offer multiple levels of care (independent living, assisted living, skilled nursing care) housed in different areas of the same community or campus and which give residents the opportunity to remain in the same community if their needs change. Provide residential services (meals, housekeeping, laundry), social and recreational services, health care services, personal care, and nursing care. Require payment of a monthly fee and possibly a large lump-sum entrance fee. (Licensed as nursing homes/residential care facilities or as homes for the aging.)

Continuum of Care

The entire spectrum of specialized health, rehabilitative, and residential services available to the frail and chronically ill. The services focus on the social, residential, rehabilitative and supportive needs of individuals as well as needs that are essentially medical in nature.

Contracture

A permanent shortening of a muscle, tendon, or scar tissue producing deformity.

Converting Measures

The act of converting from one measurement system to another such as Celsius to Fahrenheit, or metric to standard (SAE).

COPD

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease. Any disorder that persistently obstructs bronchial airflow. COPD mainly involves two related diseases -- chronic bronchitis and emphysema. Both cause chronic obstruction of air flowing through the airways and in and out of the lungs. The obstruction is generally permanent and progresses (becomes worse) over time.

Coping Mechanisms

Techniques that tend to help us deal with anxiety, stress and pain. Usually a conscious process that provides sufficient relief such as exercise or humor, but which can also include denial. Can also occur as a subconscious response to anxiety, stress and pain.

Cost Containment

A set of steps to control or reduce inefficiencies in the consumption, allocation, or production of health care services which contribute to higher than necessary costs. Inefficiencies in consumption can occur when health services are inappropriately utilized; inefficiencies in allocation exist when health services could be delivered in less costly settings without loss of quality; and inefficiencies in production exist when the cost of producing health services could be reduced by using a different combination of resources.

Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA)

Increase to a monthly long-term disability benefit, usually after the first year of payments. May be a flat percentage (e.g., 3%) or tied to changes in inflation. In some states, workers' compensation income replacement benefits also include annual COLAs.

Coughing

A cough is a sudden, often repetitive, spasmodic contraction of the thoracic cavity, resulting in violent release of air from the lungs, and usually accompanied by a distinctive sound. A cough is usually initiated to clear a buildup of phlegm in the trachea. It can be a common symptom of upper respiratory infection, bronchitis, pneumonia, tuberculosis or a flu or cold.

Coughing Excessively

An extremely repetitive and spasmodic cough that may occur as a short-term coughing attack, or as a persistent cough that occurs for a prolonged period of time.

Cross Contamination

The physical movement or transfer of microorganisms including harmful bacteria from one person, object or place to another.

Custodial Care

Custodial care usually refers to care rendered in a Skilled Nursing Facility. Custodial care does not require a licensed medical provider, such as a nurse or therapist. Specific procedures may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

CVA

A cerebrovascular accident. The sudden death of some brain cells due to lack of oxygen when the blood flow to the brain is impaired by blockage or rupture of an artery to the brain. A CVA is also referred to as a stroke.

CVA Resident

Person who has suffered a cerebrovascular accident.

Cyanosis

A bluish color of the skin and the mucous membranes due to insufficient oxygen in the blood.

Cyanotic

Showing a bluish discoloration of the skin and mucous membranes due to insufficient oxygen in the blood (cyanosis).

D**Decubitus Ulcer**

An ulcer produced by prolonged lying down.

Deeper Tissue

The deeper layers of muscle tissue. Deep tissue massage releases the chronic patterns of tension in the body through slow strokes and deep finger pressure on the contracted areas, either following or going across the grain of muscles, tendons and fascia.

Dehydration

When the body does not have as much water and fluids as it should. Dehydration can be caused by losing too much fluid, not drinking enough water or fluids, or both. Vomiting and diarrhea are common causes. Infants and children are more susceptible to dehydration than adults because of their smaller body weights and higher turnover of water and electrolytes. The elderly and those with illnesses are also at higher risk. Dehydration is classified as mild, moderate, or severe based on how much of the body's fluid is lost or not replenished. When severe, dehydration is a life-threatening emergency.

Deinstitutionalization

Policy which calls for the provision of supportive care and treatment for medically and socially dependent individuals in the community and home rather than in an institutional setting.

Delusions

An abnormal mental state characterized by the occurrence of false belief(s) regarding one's self or other persons or objects, irregardless of the apparent facts.

Demanding Resident

A patient or resident that continually or repeatedly issues "orders" and "demands" to the medical team, and which, often exhibits unreasonable or aggravated behavior if their orders are questioned or not followed.

Demeanor

The way in which a person behaves; Behavior through which one reveals one's personality.

Dementia

Term which describes a group of diseases (including Alzheimer's Disease) which are characterized by memory loss and other declines in mental functioning.

Denial

The refusal to admit the truth or reality, i.e. a person who refuses to admit that they have a problem with alcohol or drugs.

Dentures

An artificial set of replacement teeth for any teeth that are missing. There are partial dentures, which take the place of only a few teeth and prevent the others from changing position, and there are complete dentures, which replace every tooth in the mouth.

Dependability

The quality of being dependable, reliable and capable of performance. Knowing that a person can and will perform without being prompted.

Depression

A mental state of depressed mood characterized by feelings of sadness, despair and discouragement. Depression ranges from normal feelings of the blues through dysthymia to major depression. It in many ways resembles the grief and mourning that follow bereavement, there are often feelings of low self esteem, guilt and self reproach, withdrawal from interpersonal contact and physical symptoms such as eating and sleep disturbances. Depression is also the fourth stage in the Kubler-Ross Theory of the dying process wherein the person expresses or feels concern for past losses and future losses.

Dermatitis

An inflammation of the skin caused by an allergic reaction, contact with an irritant, and sometimes by fungal infections. Typical symptoms of dermatitis include dryness, redness, and swelling, pain, itching and cracking. Various lesions (sores) may also occur and severe cases may weep clear fluid and resemble an infection. Specific forms of dermatitis include contact dermatitis, eczema and hand eczema.

Developmental Disability (DD)

A disability which originates before age 18, can be expected to continue indefinitely, and constitutes a substantial handicap to the disabled's ability to function normally.

Diabetes

The World Health Organization recognizes three main forms of diabetes: type 1, type 2 and gestational diabetes (or type 3, occurring during pregnancy), although these three "types" of diabetes are more accurately considered patterns of pancreatic failure rather than single diseases. Type 1 is due to autoimmune destruction of the insulin-producing cells, while type 2 and gestational diabetes are due to insulin resistance by tissues. Type 2 may progress to destruction of the insulin producing cells of the pancreas, but is still considered Type 2, even though insulin administration may be required.

Diabetes Mellitus

Type 1 and Type 2 diabetes; A group of metabolic diseases characterized by high blood sugar (glucose) levels, which result from defects in insulin secretion, or action, or both.

Diagnosis-Related Group (DRG)

A classification system which uses diagnosis information to establish hospital payments under Medicare. This system groups patient needs into 467 categories, based upon the coding system of the International Classification of Disease, Ninth Revision-Clinical Modification (ICD-9-CM).

Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)

A tool used by the medical and psychological communities to identify and classify behavioral, cognitive, and emotional problems according to a standard numerical coding system of mental disorders.

Dialysis

The separation of substances in solutions by means of their unequal diffusion through semi-porous membranes.

Diarrhea

Unusually frequent or unusually liquid bowel movements, excessive watery evacuations of fecal material. The opposite of constipation.

Diastolic

The passive rhythmic expansion or dilation of the cavities of the heart that fills them with blood.

Diet

What a person eats and drinks. Any type of eating plan.

Dietitian

A person that specializes in understanding and designing proper diets.

Digestion

The process of metabolism whereby a biological entity processes a substance, in order to chemically and mechanically convert the substance into nutrients.

Digestive System

The organs that are responsible for getting food into and out of the body and for making use of it. These organs include the salivary glands, the mouth, esophagus, stomach, small intestine, liver, gallbladder, pancreas, colon, rectum, and anus.

Direct Cost

A cost which is identifiable directly with a particular activity, service, or product of the program experiencing the costs. These costs do not include the allocation of costs to a cost center which are not specifically attributable to that cost center.

Disability

The limitation of normal physical, mental, social activity of an individual. There are varying types (functional, occupational, learning), degrees (partial, total), and durations (temporary, permanent) of disability. Benefits are often available only for specific disabilities, such as total and permanent (the requirement for Social Security and Medicare).

Discharge

A formal termination of inpatient care. Specific procedures may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

Discharging Resident

The process of completing the necessary forms and ensuring that requirements have been met in order for a resident to leave a long term care facility or nursing home. Specific procedures may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

Disease

Any abnormal condition of the body or mind that causes discomfort, dysfunction, or distress to the person affected or those in contact with the person. Sometimes the term is used broadly to include injuries, disabilities, syndromes, symptoms, deviant behaviors, and atypical variations of structure and function, while in other contexts these may be considered distinguishable categories. A disease can usually be recognized by signs, symptoms, and illness.

Disease Producing Organisms

Any pathogenic or other kind of microorganisms that is capable of producing, hosting and transmitting a disease; viruses, bacteria or protozoa.

Disinfectant

The destruction or removal of pathogenic and other kinds of microorganisms such as disease-causing organisms like viruses, bacteria or protozoa by physical or chemical means. Disinfectants are often chemical substances used to destroy viruses and microbes (germs), such as bacteria and fungi.

Disinfection

Any process that destroys or removes disease-causing organisms such as viruses, bacteria or protozoa. An intentional procedure used to control micro-organisms on non-living surfaces such as: instruments, implements or environmental surfaces. Specific procedures may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

Disoriented Resident

A patient or resident that is temporarily or permanently confused in regard to where they are, what the time is, how they got there or where they have been. Often involves a loss of direction (north-south/up-down/right-left).

Disposal

To "throw away" or deposit in to an appropriate container such as a trash can, sharps bin or bio-hazard container. Specific procedures may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

Disposing of Contaminated Materials

A key nursing skill involving the action of depositing medical waste in to an appropriate container such as a trash can, sharps bin or bio-hazard container. Specific procedures may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

Disrespectful Treatment

Intentional negative actions that are physically, mentally or emotionally harmful to a patient/resident, including physical actions, verbal actions and/or use of body language. Often represents a violation of professional, ethical and moral standards. Can be a criminal violation as well.

Dizziness

Physical unsteadiness, imbalance, and/or lightheadedness that can often cause a loss of balance. A spinning sensation or a sensation that one is falling.

DNR

Do Not Resuscitate. "No Code"

Documentation

A key nursing skill wherein the nurse records in a permanent format important or significant information pertaining to the patient/resident care that has been given, or will be given; a written or audio or visual report describing observations, facts and measurements for later use and reference by other persons.

Dorsal

Relating to the back or posterior of a structure. As opposed to the ventral, or front, of the structure. The dorsal surfaces of the body are primarily the back, buttocks, calves, and the knuckle side of the hand.

Dressing Resident

A key nursing skill wherein the nurse actually assists the patient or resident in changing from one set of clothes to another. The techniques used are dependent on the abilities, disabilities, and cooperation of the patient or resident and may range from providing only minor assistance to full dependency on the nurse for a clothing change. Specific procedures may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

Droplet Precautions

Wearing a face mask (or other PPE) during patient/resident care; restricting visits by unaffected persons. Specific procedures may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

Droplet Secretions

Droplets expelled from the mouth or nose as a result of coughing, sneezing, belching, talking, laughing or suctioning.

Draw/Lift

A draw sheet placed under the resident but on top of the bottom sheet that is used to gently move the resident upwards in the bed thereby decreasing the chance of skin sheering.

Drowsy

A symptom that a person is in need of sleep, often accompanied by yawning and nodding wherein the neck muscles relax and the head may drop briefly as the person drifts in and out of the earliest stage of sleep.

Dry Skin

Also called xerosis. Skin that is generally dry (may include dry eyelids). A natural oil coating covers our skin that is produced by the skin oil glands. If this oil is removed or reduced, then the skin becomes dry and may crack. This can lead to inflammation.

Durable Medical Equipment (DME)

(Also called home medical equipment.) Equipment such as hospital beds, wheelchairs, and prosthetics used at home. May be covered by Medicaid and in part by Medicare or private insurance.

Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care (DPAHC)

Durable Power of Attorney for Health Care (DPAHC) is a legal document whereby an individual grants authority to someone else to make health care decisions for him or her. These decisions are made if the individual becomes incapacitated and include the granting or withholding of life sustaining treatment.

Dying Process

The various physical and mental changes or stages that a person goes through when they are dying. The controversial Elizabeth Kubler-Ross Theory of the dying process identifies certain stages. These include 1) Denial and Isolation, 2) Anger, 3) Bargaining, 4) Depression, and 5) Acceptance.

Dysphagia

Difficulty with swallowing.

Dyspnea

Difficult or labored respiration; difficulty breathing.

Dysuria

Painful or difficult urination. Dysuria is most commonly due to bacterial infection of the urinary tract causing inflammation of the bladder (cystitis) or kidney (pyelonephritis).

E**Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment Program (EPSDT)**

A program mandated by law as part of the Medicaid program. The law requires that all states have in effect a program for eligible children under age 21 to ascertain their physical or mental defects and to provide such health care treatments and other measures to correct or ameliorate defects and chronic conditions discovered. The state programs also have active outreach components to inform eligible persons of the benefits available to them, to provide screening, and if necessary, to assist in obtaining appropriate treatment.

Edema

An abnormal and excess accumulation of fluids in connective tissue or a body cavity.

Elastic Stockings

Antiembotic stockings; TED hose.

Elder Abuse

Elder Abuse is mistreatment of a person 65 years of age or older. Elder Abuse may include physical abuse, neglect, intimidation, fiduciary abuse, abandonment, or other acts resulting in physical harm or mental suffering. Everyone should report all observed, known, or suspected incidents of elder abuse that occurs in the community to Adult Protective Services.

Electrical Equipment

Any human built device that requires electricity to function.

Elimination of Wastes

A bowel movement ; when body waste (feces) is discharged from the rectum and anus.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

Services utilized in responding to the perceived individual need for immediate treatment for medical, physiological, or psychological illness or injury.

Emesis Basin

Usually a metal or plastic basin that is used to catch vomit, spit or food debris by placing under the chin and mouth. Often shaped like a kidney bean to better curve around the chin and neck.

Emotion

Any strong feeling such as love, joy, pleasure, elation, happiness, courage, fear, sadness, anger, hate, irritation and disgust; the language of a person's mental state of being.

Emotional Lability

Crying or laughing without any reason or when it is inappropriate.

Emotional Needs

Love, joy, pleasure, happiness, courage, friendship, compassion and even fear.

Emotional Stress

When a person experiences anxiety and frustration because they are either overwhelmed by, or perceive a lack of, strong feelings such as love, joy, pleasure, elation, happiness, courage, fear, sadness, anger, hate, irritation or disgust.

Emotional Support

The process of providing a resident, patient or their family member with a feeling of hope, support, and understanding in an effort to improve their mental state of being.

Empathetic

Showing empathy, comprehension or understanding of other person's condition, feelings or state of mind.

Empathy

Feeling of concern and understanding for another person's condition, feelings, situation or state of mind.

Emphysema

A condition characterized by air-filled expansions like blisters; a local or generalized condition of the lung marked by distension, progressive loss of elasticity, and eventual rupture of the alveoli accompanied by labored breathing, a strong cough, and frequently by impairment of heart action.

Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA)

A federal act, passed in 1974, that established new standards and reporting/disclosure requirements for employer-funded pension and health benefit programs.

Enteric

Involving the digestive tract.

Epidemiology

The study of the patterns of determinants and antecedents of disease in human populations. It utilizes biology, clinical medicine, and statistics in an effort to understand the etiology (causes) of illness and/or disease. The ultimate goal of the epidemiologist is not merely to identify underlying causes of a disease but to apply findings to disease prevention and health promotion.

Epilepsy

When nerve cells in the brain fire electrical impulses at a rate of up to four times higher than normal, this causes a sort of electrical storm in the brain, known as a seizure. A pattern of repeated seizures is referred to as epilepsy. Known causes include head injuries, brain tumors, lead poisoning, mal-development of the brain, genetic and infectious illnesses. But in fully half of cases, no cause can be found.

Escort Services

(Also called transportation services.) Provides transportation for older adults to services and appointments. May use bus, taxi, volunteer drivers, or van services that can accommodate wheelchairs and persons with other special needs. Specific procedures may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

Estate Recovery

By law states are required to recover funds from certain deceased Medicaid recipients' estates up to the amount spent by the state for all Medicaid services (e.g., nursing facility, home and community-based services, hospital, and prescription costs).

Ethical Code

An organized group of ethical behavior rules and guidelines, which govern the day-to-day activities of a profession or organization.

Ethical Issues

A suspicion, belief or concern that moral principles, values, rules or standards of conduct may have been violated. An activity that conveys the appearance or suspicion that some standard of conduct may have been violated.

Ethics

A set of moral principles, values, rules and standards of conduct. Specific policies may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

Evacuation

The process of removing ones self and other persons or objects from a dangerous or potentially dangerous location during an emergency. Also used in reference to a bowel movement.

Exercise

The activity of using and exerting your muscles in various ways to keep fit; any activity done for the purpose of keeping fit and healthy, or sociable in a group form like football.

Extended Care Facility

An Extended Care Facility is a healthcare center (e.g., Skilled Nursing Facility, Long-term Care Facility, and Nursing Home) which typically provides continuation of care after a hospital stay or when patients require care beyond that available in their own homes.

Extension

Opposite of flexion. A body part (i.e. hand, neck, trunk, etc.) going from a bent to a straight position, as in leg extension; a movement in which the angle of a limb joint increases.

Extremity

A body part that extends off the main body, such as an arm, leg, hand, ear, finger or toe.

Eye Glasses

An optical device worn on the face that uses glass or glass-type lenses to improve or correct a person's eye sight.

F**Facility Policy**

A specific written principle or rule established and adopted by the facility to provide procedural guidelines for decision-making, or employee conduct or for the performance of specific tasks, activities and services. A facility policy may also define certain prohibitions or safety procedures. Depending on the situation, violation of a facility policy can be grounds for termination of employment.

Falls

The loss of stability and balance resulting in the collapse of a patient or resident wherein they may accidentally fall on the floor, an object or another person, or any combination there of. Falls often result in injuries and among other causes, may be triggered by fainting, tripping or even unexpected equipment failure (broken hand rails).

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

A 1993 federal law requiring employers with more than 50 employees to provide eligible workers up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave for birth, adoptions, foster care placement, and illnesses of employees and their families.

Fatigue

A temporary loss of strength and energy resulting from hard physical or mental work, to exhaust or get tired through overuse or great strain or stress.

Fecal Impaction

A mass of stool (feces) that remains packed in the rectum rather than being passed normally. Impaction can contribute to incontinence by irritating the urethra causing urge UI or by blocking the urethra preventing the bladder from emptying completely causing overflow incontinence.

Feces

Waste that has been eliminated from the bowels (stool, excrement).

Feeding Resident

A key nursing skill wherein the nurse actually assists the patient/resident with the eating of foods and liquids. Specific procedures may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

Feeding Tube

A small tube put into the nose that goes down into the stomach. Liquid food goes into the stomach through the feeding tube; a nasogastric or gastric feeding tube, which is used for long-term feeding or to supplement the nutritional needs of the patient.

Fee Schedule

A list of physician services in which each entry is associated with a specific monetary amount that represents the approved payment level for a given insurance plan.

Fee-for-Service

The way traditional Medicare and health insurance work. Medical providers bill for whatever service they provide. Medicare and/or traditional insurance pay their share, and the patient pays the balance through co-payments and deductibles.

Femoral Pulse

Pulse obtained from the inner side of the groin.

Fingernail Care

The process of maintaining and caring for the health of the finger nails, including cleaning, trimming and sanding. Specific procedures may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

Fire Safety Procedures

Guidelines, procedures, policies and rules that are used in a business or facility to prevent a fire from starting, or to take specific actions if a fire has already been started. Specific procedures may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

Flexed

Bent, as an arm or limb.

Flexion

Opposite of extension. A bending movement around a joint in a limb (knee, elbow, fingers) that decreases the angle between the actual bones of the limb at the joint; a forward raising of the arm or leg by movement at the shoulder or hip.

Fluid Intake

Fluids administered into the body by mouth, intravenous, or feeding tube.

Foley Catheter

A catheter with an inflatable balloon tip for retention in the bladder. After the catheter is inserted in the bladder, the balloon is inflated (with air or fluid) so that the catheter cannot pull out but is retained in the bladder as an "indwelling" catheter. Removal is accomplished simply by deflating the balloon and slipping the catheter out.

Foot Board

Padded boards placed against the patient/resident's feet to keep them flexed, to prevent foot drop and to prevent pressure sores. Specific procedures may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

Foot Care

A key skill wherein the nurse actually assists the patient/resident with keeping their feet clean, dry and warm. Specific procedures may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

Foot Drop

A condition of weakness in the muscles of the foot and ankle, caused by poor nerve conduction, which interferes with a person's ability to flex the ankle and walk with a normal heel-toe pattern. The condition when a person cannot flex their ankle upwards towards the knee (opposite of pointing your toe). It may develop suddenly or slowly and may or may not be painful depending on the underlying condition.

Force Majeure

Events that are beyond reasonable human control, such as earthquakes, epidemics, blockades, wars, acts of sabotage, tornados and major storms.

For-Profit

Organization or company in which profits are distributed to shareholders or private owners.

Fowlers Position

An inclined position in which the head of the bed is raised to promote dependent drainage after an abdominal operation. The head of an adjustable bed is elevated to the desired height, about 60-90 cm, to produce angulations of the body, usually 45° to 60°. Knees may or may not be bent. The position is used to facilitate breathing and drainage for the comfort of the bedridden patient while eating or talking.

Fracture

A break in a bone, cartilage, tooth or other rigid bone tissue. Types of bone fractures include simple, compound, comminuted, greenstick, incomplete, impacted, longitudinal, oblique, stress or transverse.

Frequent Urination

Having to urinate often; urinating more often than is usual. Can be indicative of problems with the prostate or urinary tract.

Function with Assistance

A person with a physical or mental impairment that is able to function when assistance is provided by another person.

Functionally Disabled

A person with a physical or mental impairment that limits the individual's capacity for independent living.

G**Gait Belt**

Also called a transfer belt. A device used to transport people from one thing to another. For example you would use a gait belt to move a patient from a bed to a wheelchair. The gait belt is worn around one's waist. The purpose for this is to put less strain on the back. One would use this device in a nursing home, a hospital, or facilities of that sort. Specific procedures may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

Gastrostomy Tube

The tube placed in a surgical opening through the abdominal wall into the stomach.

Geriatrician

A geriatrician is a physician who has had basic postgraduate training in either Internal Medicine or Family Medicine with an additional 1-2 years training in medical, social, and psychological issues that concern older adults.

Geriatrics

Medical specialty focusing on treatment of health problems of the elderly.

Germ

A disease-causing organism, particularly bacteria, fungi, parasites and viruses.

Germ Transmission

The transfer or movement of a disease-causing organism (bacteria, fungi, parasites and viruses) from one host or location to another host or location.

Gerontology

Study of the biological, psychological and social processes of aging.

Gloves

A type of personal protection equipment that is worn on the hands to shield or prohibit the hands from coming in contact with another person, object or substance.

Grand Mal Seizure

A form of epilepsy characterized by tonic-clonic seizures involving two phases -- the tonic phase in which the body becomes rigid, and clonic phase in which there is uncontrolled jerking. Tonic-clonic seizures may or may not be preceded by an aura, and are often followed by headache, confusion, and sleep. They may last for mere seconds, or continue for several minutes.

Grieving Process

The natural human process of feeling distress or sorrow.

Group Home

Also called adult care home or board and care home. A residence which offers housing and personal care services for less than 20 residents. Services (such as meals, supervision, and transportation) are usually provided by the owner or manager. May be a single family home. (Licensed as adult family home or adult group home.)

H**Hair Care**

A nursing skill wherein the nurse actually assists the patient/resident with the proper washing, drying and combing/brushing of a patient or residents hair. Specific procedures may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

Hand Care

A nursing skill wherein the nurse actually assists the patient/resident with the proper washing, drying and care of a patient or residents hands. Specific procedures may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

Hand Tremors

An involuntary and rhythmic shaking or movement in the muscles of the hand.

Hand Washing

The process of thoroughly scrubbing your hands with soap and water to remove organisms, grime and dirt as a form of infection control. Specific procedures may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

Handicapped

As defined by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, any person who has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activity, has a record of such impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment.

Health

The state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. It is recognized, however, that health has many dimensions (anatomical, physiological, and mental) and is largely culturally defined. The relative importance of various disabilities will differ depending upon the cultural milieu and the role of the affected individual in that culture. Most attempts at measurement have been assessed in terms of morbidity and mortality.

Health Care Team

The members of a medical team who provide the care for a resident or patient, including the doctors, nurses and nurse aides. May also include physical therapist, occupational therapist, nutritionist and other specialists as needed.

Health Insurance

financial protection against the medical care costs arising from disease or accidental bodily injury. Such insurance usually covers all or part of the medical costs of treating the disease or injury. Insurance may be obtained on either an individual or a group basis.

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)

federal health insurance legislation passed in 1996, which sets standards for access, portability, and renewability that apply to group coverage--both fully insured and self-funded--as well as to individual coverage. HIPAA allows under specified conditions, for long-term care insurance policies to be qualified for certain tax benefits under Section 7702(b) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Health Maintenance Organization (HMO)

Managed care organization that offers a range of health services to its members for a set rate, but which requires its members to use health care professionals who are part of its network of providers. (See also Medicare HMOs.)

Hearing Aid

An artificial instrument that amplifies sound to assist persons with hearing loss. They are distinguished by where they are worn: in the ear (ITE), in the canal (ITC), completely in the canal (CIC), behind the ear (BTE), or on the body.

Hearing Impaired

A term used as a medical description of a person who has less than normal hearing audilogically. Hearing impairment or deafness is the decreased or absent ability to perceive auditory information. While some cases of hearing loss are reversible with medical treatment, many lead to a permanent disability.

Heart

The hollow, muscular organ located behind the sternum and between the lungs that pumps blood through the blood vessels by repeated, rhythmic contractions.

Heart Attack

A heart attack, known medically as an acute myocardial infarction or MI, occurs when a coronary artery is completely blocked or almost completely blocked. Blood and nutrients are not able to reach the part of the heart muscle below the blockage. The severity of the heart attack is a result primarily of the area of the heart that is affected. The loss of blood supply is usually caused by a complete blockage of a coronary artery, one of the arteries that supplies blood to the heart muscle.

Heart Muscle

The cardiac muscle. The muscle tissue of the heart; adapted to continued rhythmic contraction. Myocardium is the muscular tissue of the heart. Other tissues are the endocardium (inner lining, effectively a specialized endothelium) and the pericardium (a connective tissue layer around the heart).

Heat Application

Warmth that is applied to a sore or injured area of the body for a short period of time to help with comfort.

Heat/Cold Application

Warmth or cold that is applied to a sore or injured area of the body for a short period of time to help with comfort.

Heat Stroke

A medical condition caused by a rapid elevated temperature of the body where the body's internal organs begin to shut down because of excessive heat. It occurs when the body's heat regulating mechanisms – including convection, sweating, and respiration – fail. Heat stroke is a serious medical condition and requires immediate medical care.

Height

A measurement that indicates how tall a person or object is from its base to its peak (bottom to top).

Heimlich Maneuver

An emergency first-aid treatment used on a person choking on food or a foreign object to prevent asphyxiation. It consists of a series of under-the-diaphragm abdominal thrusts.

Hemiplegia

Paralysis of one side of the body.

Hepatitis A

Inflammation of the liver caused by the hepatitis A virus (HAV). HAV is usually transmitted from person to person by food or drink that has been contaminated with the stool of a person with hepatitis A. This type of transmission is called "fecal-oral." The virus is more easily spread in areas where there are poor sanitary conditions or where good personal hygiene is not observed. The symptoms and signs tend to appear abruptly and may include fatigue, loss of appetite, nausea, diarrhea, abdominal pain, fever, and jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes) and dark urine. Symptoms usually last less than 2 months. A few persons are ill for as long as 6 months. Recovery is usually complete. The diagnosis of hepatitis A is confirmed by a blood test (IgM anti-HAV).

Hepatitis B

Inflammation of the liver due to the hepatitis B virus (HBV), once thought to be passed only through blood products. It is now known that hepatitis B can also be transmitted via needle sticks, body piercing and tattooing using unsterilized instruments, the dialysis process, sexual and even less intimate close contact, and childbirth. Symptoms include fatigue, jaundice, nausea, vomiting, dark urine, light stools. Diagnosis is by blood test.

Hepatitis C

Inflammation of the liver due to the hepatitis C virus (HCV), which is usually spread by blood transfusion, hemodialysis, and needle sticks. HCV causes most transfusion-associated hepatitis, and the damage it does to the liver can lead to cirrhosis and cancer. Transmission of the virus by sexual contact is rare. At least half of HCV patients develop chronic hepatitis C infection. Diagnosis is by blood test.

Hip Prosthesis

An artificial hip.

Home and Community-Based Waivers

Section 2176 of the Omnibus Reconciliation Act permits states to offer, under a waiver, a wide array of home and community-based services that an individual may need to avoid institutionalization. Regulations to implement the act list the following services as community and home-based services which may be offered under the waiver program: case management, homemaker, home health aide, personal care, adult day health care, habilitation, respite care and other services.

Home-Delivered Meals

Home-delivered meals provide meals to older persons who are homebound by reason of illness, disability, or isolation. They are provided under contract with the County of Orange. No fee is charged, but contributions are encouraged.

Home Health

Home health care is a skilled health care service provided to individuals who are homebound and limited in their ability to leave their residence. Through intermittent home visits, nurses, and therapists provide skilled nursing and physical, occupational and speech therapy. Some personal care may also be covered in conjunction with the skilled care. A physician must order and monitor this service, which is reimbursed by Medicare and most private insurance plans for a limited period of time.

Home Health Agency (HHA)

A public or private organization that provides home health services supervised by a licensed health professional in the patient's home either directly or through arrangements with other organizations.

Home Health Aide

A person who, under the supervision of a home health or social service agency, assists elderly, ill or disabled person with household chores, bathing, personal care, and other daily living needs. Social service agency personnel are sometimes called personal care aides.

Home Health Care

Includes a wide range of health-related services such as assistance with medications, wound care, intravenous (IV) therapy, and help with basic needs such as bathing, dressing, mobility, etc., which are delivered at a person's home.

Home Medical Equipment

(Also called durable medical equipment.) Equipment such as hospital beds, wheelchairs, and prosthetics used at home. May be covered by Medicaid and in part by Medicare or private insurance.

Homebound

One of the requirements to qualify for Medicare home health care. Means that someone is generally unable to leave the house, and if they do leave home, it is only for a short time (e.g., for a medical appointment) and requires much effort.

Homecare Services

Homecare Services are also known as companion care, domestic services, homemaker services, and personal care. Homecare (non-medical) services provide assistance with housekeeping services, personal care, and Activities of Daily Living, all of which help the older adult to remain safely at home. These services may also include light house-cleaning, meal preparation, doing laundry, grocery shopping, and running errands. Additional non-medical homecare services include feeding, bathing, bowel and bladder care, and dressing.

Homemaker Services

In-home help with meal preparation, shopping, light housekeeping, money management, personal hygiene and grooming, and laundry.

Hospice

Hospice is a special way of caring for a person with a terminal illness. A person is eligible to receive hospice care when they have a life expectancy of six months or less and choose comfort care, over treatment, to cure the illness. A team of physicians, nurses, counselors, therapists, social workers, aides, and volunteers focus on the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of patients and their families. While most hospice is delivered to patients in their own homes, hospice care may also be delivered in Residential Care Facilities and Skilled Nursing Facilities.

Hospice Care

Services for the terminally ill provided in the home, a hospital, or a long-term care facility. Includes home health services, volunteer support, grief counseling, and pain management.

Hospital

An institution whose primary function is to provide inpatient diagnostic and therapeutic services for a variety of medical conditions, both surgical and nonsurgical.

Hypertension

Blood pressure that is abnormally high because of hereditary tendency, or emotional tensions, or faulty nutrition, or hormonal influences; can be triggered by nephritis, diabetes, or hyperthyroidism; often accompanied by nervousness, headaches or dizziness.

Hyperventilation

An excessive rate and depth of respiration leading to abnormal loss of carbon dioxide from the blood.

Hypoglycemia

An abnormal decrease of sugar in the blood.

I**Immobility**

Incapable of moving or being moved; not moving.

Impaction

The condition where a tooth or feces or an object is lodged or stuck in a body passage or cavity.

Impairment

Any loss or abnormality of psychological, physiological, or anatomical function.

Incident Command

The term used to refer to the command and control center during a major emergency incident, from which, all rescue and recovery operations are coordinated.

Incontinence

Inability of the body to control evacuative functions; loss of control of ability to urinate or defecate.

Independent Living Facility

Rental units in which services are not included as part of the rent, although services may be available on site and may be purchased by residents for an additional fee.

Indigent Care

Health services provided to the poor or those unable to pay. Since many indigent patients are not eligible for federal or state programs, the costs which are covered by Medicaid are generally recorded separately from indigent care costs.

Indirect Cost

Cost which cannot be identified directly with a particular activity, service or product of the program experiencing the cost. Indirect costs are usually apportioned among the program's services in proportion to each service's share of direct costs.

Indwelling Catheter

An implanted tube (catheter) intentionally left within a body organ or passage to maintain drainage, prevent obstruction, or to provide a route for administering food or drugs.

Infection

An invasion of an organism by a pathogen such as bacteria or viruses. Some infections lead to disease.

Infection Control

A key nursing skill wherein measures are practiced in healthcare facilities to decrease transmission and acquisition of infectious agents (eg, proper hand hygiene, scrupulous work practices, use of personal protective equipment (PPE) [masks or respirators, gloves, gowns, and eye protection]; infection control measures are based on how an infectious agent is transmitted and include standard, contact, droplet, and airborne precautions.

In-Home Supportive Services

In-Home Supportive Services is a place where arrangements can be made for personal assistance for persons having difficulty with activities of daily living.

In-House Transfer

The process of moving a resident or patient to another location within the same facility, may be a different room or a different wing.

Initial Observations

Usually the first observations made that have yet to be substantiated by additional testing or by repeated observations made over a period of time; a "gut-feeling" that something may not be normal or as expected.

Inpatient

A person who has been admitted at least overnight to a hospital or other health facility (which is therefore responsible for his or her room and board) for the purpose of receiving diagnostic treatment or other health services.

Input/Output

The amount taken in by the body and the amount put out by the body

In-Service Programs

Programs that are provided by and within a medical facility to either assist residents and patients with health care, or to inform staff of new equipment, policies, etc.

Institutional Health Services

Health services delivered on an inpatient basis in hospitals, nursing homes, or other inpatient institutions. The term may also refer to services delivered on an outpatient basis by departments or other organizational units of, or sponsored by, such institutions.

Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs)

Household/independent living tasks which include using the telephone, taking medications, money management, housework, meal preparation, laundry, and grocery shopping.

Insulin

A natural hormone made by the pancreas that controls the level of the sugar glucose in the blood. Insulin permits cells to use glucose for energy. Cells cannot utilize glucose without insulin.

Intake/Output

See Input/Output

Integumentary System

The body system consisting of the skin, hair and nails, that acts as a barrier to protect the body from the outside world. It also functions to retain body fluids, protect against disease, eliminate waste products, and regulate body temperature. The most important function of the integumentary system is "protection".

Intermediate Care

Occasional nursing and rehabilitative care ordered by a doctor and performed or supervised by skilled medical personnel.

Intermediate Care Facility (ICF)

A nursing home, recognized under the Medicaid program, which provides health-related care and services to individuals who do not require acute or skilled nursing care, but who, because of their mental or physical condition, require care and services above the level of room and board available only through facility placement. Specific requirements for ICF's vary by state. Institutions for care of the mentally retarded or people with related conditions (ICF/MR) are also included. The distinction between "health-related care and services" and "room and board" is important since ICF's are subject to different regulations and coverage requirements than institutions which do not provide health-related care and services.

Intermediate Care Facility for the Mentally Retarded (ICF/MR)

An ICF which cares specifically for the mentally retarded.

International Classification of Diseases, ninth edition (Clinical Modification) (ICD-9-CM)

A list of diagnoses and identifying codes used by physicians and other health care providers. The coding and terminology provide a uniform language that permits consistent communication on claim forms.

International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF)

An internationally standardized list of identifying codes and definitions of human functioning and disabilities organized by body functions and structures, domains of activities and participation, and environmental factors. The coding and terminology provide a uniform language that permits consistent communication on claim forms.

International Time

Differences in time between two or more locations as defined by time zones.

Interpersonal Skills

Establishing trust and good communications with patients/residents.

Intervention

The act or fact of interfering with a condition in order to modify it or to implement a process to change its course.

Inventory

A detailed description of quantities and locations of different kinds of facilities, major equipment, and personnel which are available in a geographic area and the amount, type, and distribution of services these resources can support.

Isolation

Separation of a patient or resident from direct contact with other residents; to prevent full or limited contact and interaction with other patients or residents to prevent the spread of a communicable disease or to prevent exposure to potential pathogens.

J**Jaundice**

Yellow staining of the skin and sclerae (the whites of the eyes) by abnormally high blood levels of the bile pigment bilirubin. The yellowing extends to other tissues and body fluids.

Job Application

A written or electronic form used to apply for a job.

Job Description

A detailed written description prepared by your employer that identifies what you are expected to do and the skills and tasks that you will be expected to perform (responsibilities). It should identify who your direct supervisor is and it may or may not identify specific prohibitions that you must adhere to. Specific job descriptions may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

Job Interview

A pre-planned conversation between a person and a potential employer, either face-to-face or by telephone, video or internet. The purpose of a job interview is to convey your qualifications and convince the employer that you should be hired.

K**Kidney Failure**

Also known as "renal failure". The condition in which the kidneys fail to function properly. Physiologically, renal failure is described as a decrease in the glomerular filtration rate. Clinically, this manifests in an elevated serum creatinine. It can broadly be divided into two categories: acute renal failure and chronic renal failure.

L**Level of Care (LOC)**

Amount of assistance required by consumers which may determine their eligibility for programs and services. Levels include: protective, intermediate, and skilled.

License/Licensure

A permission granted to an individual or organization by a competent authority, usually public, to engage lawfully in a practice, occupation, or activity.

Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN)

Licensed Practical Nurses (LPN) provide direct patient care under the direction of a Registered Nurse. The LPN scope of practice includes, but is not limited to, administering blood, blood component therapy, wound care, and medication administration.

Licensed Vocational Nurses (LVN)

Licensed Vocational Nurses (LVN) provide direct patient care under the direction of a Registered Nurse. The LVN scope of practice includes, but is not limited to, administering blood, blood component therapy, wound care, and medication administration.

Lift/Draw Sheets

Medical-use bed sheets used to move and transfer a patient/resident in a manner that minimizes skin friction and shearing. Specific procedures may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

Linens

Fabric materials, such as pillowcases, sheets and towels.

Long-Term Care (LTC)

Range of medical and/or social services designed to help people who have disabilities or chronic care needs. Services may be short- or long-term and may be provided in a person's home, in the community, or in residential facilities (e.g., nursing homes or assisted living facilities).

Long-Term Care Insurance

Insurance policies which pay for long-term care services (such as nursing home and home care) that Medicare and Medigap policies do not cover. Policies vary in terms of what they will cover, and may be expensive. Coverage may be denied based on health status or age.

Long-Term Care Ombudsman

An individual designated by a state or a substate unit responsible for investigating and resolving complaints made by or for older people in long-term care facilities. Also responsible for monitoring federal and state policies that relate to long-term care facilities, for providing information to the public about the problems of older people in facilities, and for training volunteers to help in the ombudsman program. The long-term care ombudsman program is authorized by Title III of the Older Americans Act.

Low Sodium Diet

A food diet that is intentionally designed to be low in salt content.

Lying On Side

The process of helping a resident or patient move the physical position of their body so that they are positioned on their side.

M**Managed Care**

Method of organizing and financing health care services which emphasizes cost-effectiveness and coordination of care. Managed care organizations (including HMOs, PPOs, and PSOs) receive a fixed amount of money per client/member per month (called a capitation), no matter how much care a member needs during that month.

Mask

A type of personal protection equipment that is worn over the mouth, the mouth and nose or the entire face in order to prevent the inhalation of airborne secretions or droplets from another person, object or substance. Also used to prevent other persons, objects or substances from being exposed to the breath, secretions and droplets produced by the person wearing the mask.

Maslow Hierarchy

A controversial psychological theory that Abraham Maslow proposed in 1943 in his paper *A Theory of Human Motivation*, which he subsequently amended. According to his theory, as humans meet 'basic needs', they seek to satisfy successively 'higher needs' that occupy a set hierarchy. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is often depicted as a pyramid consisting of five levels: physiological needs, safety needs, love/belonging needs, esteem needs, and self actualization.

Mastectomy

A general term for the surgical removal of the breast, usually to remove cancerous tissue.

Material Safety Data (MSD)

Educational and safety information and classification systems pertaining to the toxicity, hazards and risks of working with specific chemicals, substances and material types based on extensive laboratory testing and on the study of historical use, accidents and effects.

Meal Time

A designated time when meals should be served and eaten by a person, often determined by the use of medicines, treatments or sleep cycles.

Mechanical Soft Diet

Puree, pulverized and processed foods for people who have trouble chewing and/or swallowing more textured foods.

Medicaid (Title XIX)

Federal and state-funded program of medical assistance to low-income individuals of all ages. There are income eligibility requirements for Medicaid.

Medical Asepsis

A key nursing skill involving use of infection control practices that are common in every health care situation such as basic hand washing and cleaning. Specific procedures may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

Medical Necessity

Services or supplies which are appropriate and consistent with the diagnosis in accord with accepted standards of community practice and are not considered experimental. They also can not be omitted without adversely affecting the individual's condition or the quality of medical care.

Medical Record

A written or electronic account of a patient's medical history, current illness, diagnosis, details of treatments, chronological progress notes, and discharge recommendations. This is a legal document the patient is entitled to read and is authenticated by the physician's signature. There are strict rules regarding the confidentiality of the medical record.

Medically Indigent

People who cannot afford needed health care because of insufficient income and/or lack of adequate health insurance.

Medicare (Title XVIII)

Medicare is a Federal health insurance program for persons 65 years of age and over, persons considered permanently disabled for purposes of the Social Security Act, and persons with end-stage renal disease. Medicare is divided into two parts: Medicare Part A and Medicare Part B. Part A Hospital Insurance Benefits provide some protection against the medically necessary costs of hospital and related healthcare. Medicare A is financed through Social Security payroll tax deductions. It covers institutional care in hospitals and skilled nursing facilities and also care given by home health agencies and hospices. No premium is required from persons entitled to retirement or disability benefits from Social Security or Railroad Retirement. Part B Medical Insurance Benefits is financed through Federal contributions and the monthly premiums of the enrollees. The monthly premiums are automatically deducted from Social Security checks, unless the beneficiary indicates that he or she does not want Medicare B. Medicare B covers outpatient services, physician visits, ambulance transportation, and durable medical equipment. It also covers some home health care. In addition to paying a monthly premium for Part B, Medicare beneficiaries are often required to pay a portion of the cost of the Medicare-covered services they receive. This "cost-sharing" takes the form of deductibles and co-insurance amounts. A beneficiary is responsible for a minimum of 20% of the Medicare-approved amount under Part B. These amounts may change annually and older adults may find these changes in The Medicare Handbook, published annually and available at no charge through the Social Security Administration.

Medicare HMOs

Under Medicare HMOs (health maintenance organizations), members pay their regular monthly premiums to Medicare, and Medicare pays the HMO a fixed sum of money each month to provide Medicare benefits (e.g., hospitalization, doctor's visits, and more). Medicare HMOs may provide extra benefits over and above regular Medicare benefits (such as prescription drug coverage, eyeglasses, and more). Members do not pay Medicare deductibles and co-payments; however, the HMO may require them to pay an additional monthly premium and co-payments for some services. If members use providers outside the HMO's network, they pay the entire bill themselves unless the plan has a point of service option.

Medicare Supplement Insurance (MedSupp)

(Also called Medigap.) Insurance supplement to Medicare that is designed to fill in the "gaps" left by Medicare (such as co-payments). May pay for some limited long-term care expenses, depending on the benefits package purchased.

Medications

A licensed drug taken to cure or reduce symptoms of an illness or medical condition. Medications are generally divided into two groups -- over the counter (OTC) medications, which are available in pharmacies and supermarkets without special restrictions, and prescription only (POM), which must be prescribed by a physician.

Medigap

(Also called Medicare supplement insurance. Insurance supplement to Medicare that is designed to fill in the "gaps" left by Medicare (such as co-payments). May pay for some limited long-term care expenses, depending on the benefits package purchased.

Memory Loss

The complete or partial loss of a persons memory. May be a "short-term" memory loss or a "long-term" memory loss. The memory loss may be permanent or temporary, depending on the cause.

Meningitis

Inflammation of the meninges, usually due to a bacterial infection but sometimes from viral, protozoan, or other causes (in some cases the cause cannot be determined). The onset is usually rapid (acute), and if untreated, the disease can be fatal within a very short period of time. The early symptoms are non-specific and flu-like. They are followed by more serious symptoms, which may include rash, stiff neck, confusion, vomiting, loss of appetite, fever, headache, and coma.

Menopause

The time in a woman's life when menstrual periods permanently stop; it is also called the "change of life." Menopause is the opposite of the menarche.

Mental Health

The capacity in an individual to function effectively in society. Mental health is a concept influenced by biological, environmental, emotional, and cultural factors and is highly variable in definition, depending on time and place. It is often defined in practice as the absence of any identifiable or significant mental disorder and sometimes improperly used as a synonym for mental illness.

Mental Health Services

Variety of services provided to people of all ages, including counseling, psychotherapy, psychiatric services, crisis intervention, and support groups. Issues addressed include depression, grief, anxiety, stress, as well as severe mental illnesses.

Mental Illness/Impairment

A deficiency in the ability to think, perceive, reason, or remember, resulting in loss of the ability to take care of one's daily living needs.

Mentally Impaired

Persons with a deficiency in the ability to think, perceive, reason, or remember, resulting in loss of the ability to take care of one's daily living needs.

Microorganisms

A microorganism or microbe is an organism that is microscopic (too small to be visible to the naked eye). Microorganisms are often described as single-celled, or unicellular organisms; however, some unicellular protists are visible to the naked eye, and some multicellular species are microscopic. The study of microorganisms is called microbiology.

Minerals

Organic substances needed in the diet in small amounts to help regulate body function and to stay strong. Humans need small amounts of about 25 minerals to maintain normal body function and good health. Iron, calcium, potassium, and sodium are some of the primary minerals.

Mistakes

Unintentional errors.

Mistreatment

The practice of treating someone or something badly.

Mobility

Mobile ability; movement that involves changing the position of oneself or an object. Capable of moving or being moved readily such as a joint like the elbow or knee. Movement around an entire joint.

Money

Currency, as in coins and bills, irregardless of the amount or denomination.

Morbidity

The extent of illness, injury, or disability in a defined population. It is usually expressed in general or specific rates of incidence or prevalence.

Mortality

Death. Used to describe the relation of deaths to the population in which they occur.

Mouth Care

Also called oral care. A key nursing skill wherein the nurse actually assists the patient/resident with the proper care of the inside of their mouth, including the palette, teeth, gums and tongue. Specific procedures may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

Moving a Dependent Resident

The process of helping a dependent resident or patient move the the physical position of their body, or from one location to another location

Moving a Resident

The process of helping a resident or patient move the the physical position of their body, or from one location to another location.

Mucous

Covered with, secreting or containing mucus; relating to or resembling mucus.

Mucous Membrane

The mucous membranes (or mucosae; singular: mucosa) are linings of ectodermic origin, covered in epithelium, and are involved in absorption and secretion. They line various body cavities that are exposed to the external environment and internal organs. It is at several places continuous with skin: at the nostrils, the lips, the ears, the genital area, and the anus. The sticky, thick fluid secreted by the mucous membranes and gland is termed mucus. The term 'mucous membrane' refers to where they are found in the body and not every mucous membrane secretes mucus.

Muscle

The tissue of the body which primarily functions as a source of power. There are three types of muscle: 1) muscle which is responsible for moving extremities and external areas of the body (called "skeletal muscle"); 2) the heart muscle (called "cardiac muscle"), and; 3) muscle that is in the walls of arteries and the bowel (called "smooth muscle").

Muscle Spasms

Involuntarily contraction or movement of a muscle, usually in a series lasting seconds or minutes. Can occur as a single contraction.

Mucus

A viscous, slippery secretion that is usually rich in mucins; produced by mucous membranes which it moistens and protects.

Multiple Sclerosis

A disorder of the central nervous system of unknown cause in which the body's immune system attacks myelin in the brain and spinal cord. Whether the disease manifests in repeated episodes of inflammation or as a chronic condition, it results in multiple scars, or scleroses, on the myelin sheath, leading to impairment or loss of nerve function. Marked by weakness, numbness, a loss of muscle coordination, and problems with vision, speech, and bladder control.

Musculoskeletal System

The complex system involving the body's muscles and skeleton, and including the joints, ligaments, tendons, and nerves. All the muscles, bones, and cartilage of the body collectively.

Myocardial Infarction

A heart attack.

N**Nail Care**

A key nursing skill wherein the nurse actually assists the patient/resident with the care of the fingernails and toenails. Recommendations for maintaining nail health include keeping nails clean and dry to keep bacteria and other infectious organisms from collecting under the nails, cutting nails straight across with only slight rounding at the tip, using a fine-textured file to keep nails shaped and free of snags, and avoiding nail-biting. Nail changes, swelling, and pain can signal serious problems that should be reported to a physician. Specific procedures may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

Nasal Cannula

A device used in the hospital or at home to deliver supplemental oxygen to a patient or person in need of extra oxygen. This device is a plastic tube which fits around the head of a person and a set of two prongs which are placed in the nose or nares of the person. These prongs are where the oxygen flows out of.

National Incident Management System (NIMS)

The official emergency management system of the United States Government that outlines and defines how major disasters and critical incidents will be responded to and managed by state and federal agencies. Developed by the Department of Homeland Security at the request of the President of the United States, the National Incident Management System (NIMS) integrates effective practices in emergency preparedness and response into a comprehensive national framework for incident management. The NIMS enables responders at all levels to work together more effectively to manage domestic incidents no matter what the cause, size or complexity.

Natural Disaster

Any terrible event, not caused by human activity, that results in deaths, injuries, or damage to property. Events that are beyond human control, such as earthquakes, epidemics, tornados, typhoons and major storms. It differs from "force majeure" in that "blockades, wars and acts of sabotage" are not considered natural disasters.

Needles

Hollow, elongated acicular metal tubes, tapering to a fine point to permit penetration of the skin and subsequent injection of a fluid. Generally mounted on one end of a syringe.

Neglect

To fail to give care or proper attention to someone or something; A negligent act or omission that caused or may cause physical or emotional injury or death to patients by an individual responsible for providing care/services to the patient.

Neighborhood Health Center

(Also called community health center.) An ambulatory health care program usually serving a catchment area which has scarce or nonexistent health services or a population with special health needs. These centers attempt to coordinate federal, state, and local resources in a single organization capable of delivering both health and related social services to a defined population. While such a center may not directly provide all types of health care, it usually takes responsibility to arrange all medical services needed by its patient population.

Neuropsychologist

A neuropsychologist is usually a State-licensed psychologist with expertise in evaluating and treating people who suffer from a brain disorder or organic problem. Neuropsychologists may play a pivotal role in the diagnosis and treatment of mental and emotional problems caused by brain dysfunction. A neuropsychologist's service is usually covered by Medicare.

New Resident

A person who has recently been granted admission in to a long term care facility or nursing home and may not yet be familiar with other residents or staff or with the floor-plan of the facility or the meal times and services the facility provides.

Non-Contagious Disease

A disease that CAN NOT be easily spread from one person to another, from one part of the body to another, or from a person to a nonliving object and then to another person (such as person to doorknob to person).

Nonprofit/Not-For-Profit

An organization that reinvests all profits back into that organization.

Non-Verbal Communication

Communication without words; body language that is used to convey, intensify, refute, or mask a message.

Nosocomial

Originating or taking place in a hospital.

Nosocomial Infection

An infection acquired in a hospital. Specifically an infection that was not present or incubating prior to the patient being admitted to the hospital, but occurred within 72 hours after admittance to the hospital.

NPO

A Latin term "nil per os" meaning "nothing by mouth".

Nurse

An individual trained to care for the sick, aged, or injured. Can be defined as a professional qualified by education and authorized by law to practice nursing.

Nurse Practitioner (NP)

A Registered Nurse (RN) with advanced education and clinical training that works in an expanded nursing role, usually with a focus on meeting primary health care needs. NPs conduct physical examinations, interpret laboratory results, select plans of treatment, identify medication requirements, and perform certain medical management activities for selected health conditions. Some NPs specialize in geriatric care.

Nurses Station

A designated location and space within a medical facility where nurses maintain a centralized command and reporting center to manage the care being provided to residents and patients, including nurse schedules, charts, records, reports, reference materials and communication systems (intercoms, pagers and telephones). Often includes a designated desk or space for the "charge nurse" who oversees the nursing operations for a shift or a set group of patients.

Nursing Assistant Behavior

The manner, behavior and attitude that a nurse aide demonstrates while working in support of other members of a medical team and while providing care to residents and patients.

Nursing Assistant's Role

In addition to supporting other members of a medical team, the defined set of skills that can be practiced by a nurse aide and the levels of health care that can be provided to residents and patients as a member of a medical team is based on State and Federal laws and regulations and on the nurse aide training that has been provided by the initial state approved training program and by subsequent training provided by the employer (medical facility). These skills and associated responsibilities are generally defined in a "job description".

Nursing Home

Facility licensed by the state to offer residents personal care as well as skilled nursing care on a 24 hour a day basis. Provides nursing care, personal care, room and board, supervision, medication, therapies and rehabilitation. Rooms are often shared, and communal dining is common. (Licensed as nursing homes, county homes, or nursing homes/residential care facilities.)

Nursing Home Care

Full-time care delivered in a facility designed for recovery from a hospital, treatment, or assistance with common daily activities.

Nursing Station

(See Nurses Station)

O**Observation**

Closely monitoring a patient's condition but withholding treatment until symptoms appear or change. The act of observing; taking a patient look; making and recording a measurement.

Occupancy Rate

A measure of inpatient health facility use, determined by dividing available bed days by patient days. It measures the average percentage of a hospital's beds occupied and may be institution-wide or specific for one department or service.

Occupational Health Services

Health services concerned with the physical, mental, and social well-being of an individual in relation to his or her working environment and with the adjustment of individuals to their work. The term applies to more than the safety of the workplace and includes health and job satisfaction.

Occupational Therapy (OT)

Designed to help patients improve their independence with activities of daily living through rehabilitation, exercises, and the use of assistive devices. May be covered in part by Medicare.

Older Americans Act (OAA)

Federal legislation that specifically addresses the needs of older adults in the United States. Provides some funding for aging services (such as home-delivered meals, congregate meals, senior center, employment programs). Creates the structure of federal, state, and local agencies that oversee aging services programs. (See also Title III services.)

Ombudsman

A representative of a public agency or a private nonprofit organization who investigates and resolves complaints made by or on behalf of older individuals who are residents of long-term care facilities.

Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (OBRA) of 1993

Federal legislation that limits the amount of compensation that can be paid to employees covered by long-term disability plans funded through voluntary employees' beneficiary association trusts.

Oral Care

A key nursing skill wherein the nurse actually assists the patient/resident with the proper care of the inside of their mouth, including the palette, teeth, gums and tongue. Specific procedures may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

Oral Hygiene

Activities that promote good health of the mouth.

Oral Temperature

The average normal oral temperature is 98.6 °F(37 °C). An oral temperature is 0.5°F (0.3°C) to 1°F (0.6°C) lower than a rectal or ear (tympanic) temperature.

Orientation

Awareness of one's self in terms of time, space and place.

Oriented

Being aware of person, place and time.

Orthotic Device

Any device added to the body to stabilize or immobilize a body part, prevent deformity, protect against injury, or assist with functions. Also called an orthosis.

Osteoarthritis

Arthritis of middle age characterized by degenerative and sometimes hypertrophic changes in the bone and cartilage of one or more joints and a progressive wearing down of apposing joint surfaces. Can distort joint positions.

Osteoporosis

A condition that usually affects older women, characterized by a decrease in bone mass with a decreased density and enlargement of bone spaces producing porosity and fragility.

Ostomy Bag

A special bag used to capture bodily fluids that have been passed out of the body by means of an artificial passage created through surgery, such as a colostomy, ileostomy or urostomy.

Outpatient

A patient who is receiving ambulatory care at a hospital or other facility without being admitted to the facility. Usually, it does not mean people receiving services from a physician's office or other program which also does not provide inpatient care.

Overbed Table

A specially designed table with wheels, the base of which can be slid under a bed allowing the table to be positioned over the bed (and patient) so as to provide a flat and stable surface from which they can eat or read.

Oxygen

The essential element in the respiration process to sustain life. Often seen as the chemistry abbreviation O₂, gas vital for all life on this planet; makes up about 21% of the air by volume.

P**Pacemaker**

A system that sends electrical impulses to the heart in order to set the heart rhythm. The pacemaker can be the normal "natural" pacemaker of the heart or it can be an electronic device.

Paralysis

The complete loss of muscle function for one or more muscle groups. Major causes are stroke, trauma, poliomyelitis, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), botulism, spina bifida, multiple sclerosis, and Guillain-Barré syndrome.

Paranoia

A mental state that includes unreasonable suspicions of people and situations. A person who is paranoid may be suspicious, hostile, feel very important, or may become extremely sensitive to rejection by others. A belief that the actions of others are demeaning or threatening. It is characterized by feelings of being exploited or harmed by others, and questioning loyalty or trustworthiness of friends or associates.

Parkinson's Disease

A slowly progressive neurological disease often characterized by a fixed inexpressive face, a tremor at rest, slowing of voluntary movements, a gait with short accelerating steps, peculiar posture and muscle weakness. It is caused by degeneration of an area of the brain called the basal ganglia, and by low production of the neurotransmitter dopamine. Most patients are over 50, but at least 10 percent are under 40.

Partial Assistance

Nursing assistance provided to residents and patients on an "as needed" basis.

Partial Bath

A bath intended to clean and wash only part of the body. Specific procedures may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

Passive

Not active; unresisting, submissive, complacent.

Pathogens

Bacteria, viruses, parasites, or fungi that can cause disease; a specific causative agent of a disease such as bacterium or a virus.

Pathologic Process

A series of actions or events that are caused by a disease or development of a disease, particularly one characterized by gradual changes that lead toward a particular result.

Patience

The ability and willingness to wait a long time or to carry out a task that takes a long time, especially one that is by itself not heavy, but boring. It also means not easily getting angry or not showing anger in situations of human communication where the other is unreasonable.

Peer Counseling

Peer counseling occurs between two people who have something in common (e.g., age, religion, problem areas). Peer counseling for older adults typically utilizes the skills and life experience of older adult counselors under the close supervision of State-licensed mental health professionals.

Peer Review

Generally, the evaluation by practicing physicians or other professionals of the effectiveness and efficiency of services ordered or performed by other members of the profession (peers).

Per Diem

Latin for "per day". A form of payment for services in which the provider is paid a daily fee for specific services or outcomes, regardless of the cost of provision.

Perineal Care

A key nursing skill involving the careful cleansing, treatment and maintenance of the area of skin/tissue (perineum area) that extends between the anus and the genitalia, especially used in reference to women. Specific procedures may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

Peripheral Vascular Disease

Diseases of blood vessels outside the heart and brain. It is often a narrowing of vessels that carry blood to leg and arm muscles, which may cause pain in exercising or walking. This can have serious implications and must be treated. Symptoms include chronic burning, aching, numbness, and tingling, especially in the arms, hands, legs, and feet; A circulation disorder in which arteries carrying blood to the arms and legs become narrowed or clogged.

Peristalsis

The rippling motion of muscles in the digestive tract. In the stomach, this motion mixes food with gastric juices, turning it into a thin liquid.

Personal Care

(Also called custodial care.) Assistance with activities of daily living as well as with self-administration of medications and preparing special diets.

Personal Protective Equipment

Often referred to as PPE. Personal protective equipment is clothing or devices worn to help isolate or shield a person from direct exposure to a hazardous material or situation. Usually includes helmets, safety goggles, hearing protectors, face shields, respirators, arm guards, smocks, gloves, and safety boots.

Personal Stress

A person's own mental or physical tension that results from physical, emotional, or chemical causes. Personal stress can drastically hinder a person's ability to perform in their normal manner and can trigger a state of depression.

Pet Therapy

The use of trained animals to invoke an appropriate response from a patient or resident that may not be responding well to other stimuli; the use of trained animals to "lift the spirit" of patients/residents. Specific procedures may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

Phantom Pain

Pain or discomfort following amputation that feels as if it comes from the missing limb.

Phlebotomy

Obtaining blood from a vein. Phlebotomy is done by puncturing a vein with a needle in order to obtain blood for diagnostic tests or to remove blood for treatment purposes.

Physiatrist

A physiatrist is a physician with additional postgraduate training in physical medicine and rehabilitation.

Physical Needs

Water, food, sleep, warmth, health, exercise, waste disposal, and sex (see Physical Survival).

Physical Survival

Water, food, sleep, warmth, health, exercise, waste disposal and sex. Also called physiological needs. According to Maslow's Theory, as humans meet their basic needs, they seek to satisfy successively higher needs that occupy a set hierarchy. Within Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the need for physical survival is at the base of the pyramid, just below the need for safety and security.

Physical Therapist

A person medically trained and licensed to restore/improve the movement and strength in people whose mobility has been impaired by injury and disease.

Physical Therapy (PT)

Designed to restore/improve movement and strength in people whose mobility has been impaired by injury and disease. May include exercise, massage, water therapy, and assistive devices. May be covered in part by Medicare.

Physician's Authority

A multi-level authority first vested by the academic training and degree as a Doctor of Medicine, then further defined by laws and regulations that govern professional conduct and the services provided, and then further defined by contractual consent approved by a patient or resident to be cared for and provided with specific services. Under a physician's authority, prescriptions for medicines and therapeutic treatments can be made, patient records can be maintained, updated and exchanged as needed, and certain decisions can be made on a patient's behalf in the interest of providing quality health care.

Physician Assistant (PA)

(Also known as a physician extender.) A specially trained and licensed or otherwise credentialed individual who performs tasks, which might otherwise be performed by a physician, under the direction of a supervising physician.

Physiological Needs

To breathe, to regulate body temperature, for water, for sleep, to eat, to dispose of bodily waste, for sex. Also called Physical needs.

Pill-Rolling

One of the characteristic slower tremors in the fingers of Parkinson's patients; the alternating movements of the thumb and forefinger give the appearance of rolling a small object between the fingers

Plaque

A semi-hardened accumulation of substances from fluids that bathe an area. Examples include dental plaque and cholesterol plaque.

Plate Rim

The rim of a plate or bowl.

Pneumonia

Inflammation of one or both lungs with consolidation. Pneumonia is frequently but not always due to infection. The infection may be bacterial, viral, fungal or parasitic. Symptoms may include fever, chills, cough with sputum production, chest pain, and shortness of breath.

Podiatrist

A doctor who treats and takes care of people's feet.

Point of Service

A health insurance benefits program in which subscribers can select between different delivery systems (i.e., HMO, PPO and fee-for-service) when in need of medical services, rather than making the selection between delivery systems at time of open enrollment at place of employment.

Policy

A written principle or rule established and adopted by a facility to provide procedural guidelines for decision-making, employee conduct and for the performance of specific tasks, activities and services. Policies often define specific prohibitions as well as safety procedures. Depending on the situation, violation of a policy can be grounds for termination of employment.

Policy Book

An official book that contains the written policies established and adopted by a facility to provide procedural guidelines for decision-making, employee conduct and for the performance of specific tasks, activities and services. Specific policies will vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

Positioning Resident

The process of helping a resident or patient with an adjustment in the physical position of their body, whether it be sitting or lying down.

Positive Attitude

Use of words, body language or dress to convey a pleasant, friendly and supporting message about what a person thinks and feels about another person, a place or a thing; an encouraging and joyful manner in which a person reacts to a situation or stimuli.

Post-Acute Care (PAC)

(Also called subacute care or transitional care.) Type of short-term care provided by many long-term care facilities and hospitals which may include rehabilitation services, specialized care for certain conditions (such as stroke and diabetes) and/or post-surgical care and other services associated with the transition between the hospital and home. Residents on these units often have been hospitalized recently and typically have more complicated medical needs. The goal of subacute care is to discharge residents to their homes or to a lower level of care.

Post Mortem Care

The proper and respectful handling, care and transport of a body after death. Policies will vary from facility to facility.

Post-Operative Pneumonia

Pneumonia acquired after surgery.

Post-Surgical Care

Medical care and services provided to a patient immediately following surgery.

Postural Hypotension

A drop in blood pressure (hypotension) due to a change in body position (posture) when a person moves to a more vertical position: from sitting to standing or from lying down to sitting or standing. Postural hypotension is more common in older people.

Pre-Admission Certification

A process under which admission to a health institution is reviewed in advance to determine need and appropriateness and to authorize a length of stay consistent with norms for the evaluation.

Pre-Existing Condition

Illnesses or disability for which the insured was treated or advised within a stipulated time period before making application for a life or health insurance policy. A pre-existing condition can result in cancellation of the policy.

Preferred Provider Arrangement (PPA)

Selective contracting with a limited number of health care providers, often at reduced or pre-negotiated rates of payment.

Preferred Provider Organization (PPO)

Managed care organization that operates in a similar manner to an HMO or Medicare HMO except that this type of plan has a larger provider network and does not require members to receive approval from their primary care physician before seeing a specialist. It is also possible to use doctors outside the network, although there may be a higher co-payment.

Premium

The periodic payment (e.g., monthly, quarterly) required to keep an insurance policy in force.

Prepayment

Usually refers to any payment to a provider for anticipated services (such as an expectant mother paying in advance for maternity care).

Pressure Sore

See "Pressure Ulcer".

Pressure Ulcer

Bedsore, also called pressure sores or decubitus ulcers, are ulcers (sores) caused by prolonged pressure or rubbing on vulnerable areas of the body. Vulnerable areas in this case include bony/cartilaginous areas prone to moisture and friction. Examples include pressure points on the lower back (near the tail bone or sacrum or iliac crest), hips, ankles, heels and elbows, as well as the ear.

Preventing Falls

A key nursing skill wherein the nurse helps to ensure that the patient/resident has stability when needed by using gait belts or other assistive devices and by ensuring that objects will not interfere with their planned movements and activities. Specific procedures may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

Preventing Injury

A key nursing skill wherein the nurse helps to ensure that the patient/resident can remain safe and secure by using gait belts or other assistive devices and by ensuring that potentially harmful objects are removed and can not interfere with their planned movements and activities. Medical asepsis also is a component to ensure that patients/residents are safe and secure from the threat of infections.

Preventive Medicine

Care which has the aim of preventing disease or its consequences. It includes health care programs aimed at warding off illnesses (e.g., immunizations), early detection of disease (e.g., Pap smears), and inhibiting further deterioration of the body (e.g., exercise or prophylactic surgery). Preventive medicine is also concerned with general prevention measures aimed at improving the healthfulness of the environment.

Primary Care

Basic or general health care focused on the point at which a patient ideally first seeks assistance from the medical care system.

Privacy

The quality of being secluded from the presence or view of others; the ability of an individual or group to stop information about themselves from becoming known to people other than those they choose to give the information to.

PRN

Latin for "pro re nata," which means "as needed".

Probability (P value)

The likelihood that an event will occur.

Progressive

Gradually advancing in extent; advancing in severity such as "progressive paralysis"; increasing in scope or severity. In medicine, a disease that is progressive is going from bad to worse.

Prone

Face down, the opposite of supine (face up); Lying on stomach. Describing the position of a person lying horizontally on the abdomen with the face turned downward.

Prospective Payment

Any method of paying hospitals or other health programs in which amounts or rates of payment are established in advance for a defined period (usually a year).

Prosthesis

An artificial device to replace a missing body part such as a hand, an arm or a leg.

Protective Equipment

Protective equipment is clothing or devices worn to help isolate or shield a person from direct exposure to a hazardous material or situation. Usually includes helmets, safety goggles, hearing protectors, face shields, respirators, arm guards, smocks, gloves, and safety boots.

Provider

Individual or organization that provides health care or long-term care services (e.g., doctors, hospital, physical therapists, home health aides, and more).

Provider Sponsored Organization (PSO)

Managed care organization that is similar to an HMO or Medicare HMO except that the organization is owned by the providers in that plan and these providers share the financial risk assumed by the organization.

Providing Privacy

A key nursing skill wherein the nurse helps to ensure that the patient/resident has privacy when needed by using privacy screens and shielding the person from the view or presence of others. Specific procedures may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

Psychiatrist

A Psychiatrist is Board-certified, has at least 3 years of specialty training after receiving an M.D. degree, and is a medical doctor who specializes in mental disorders. A Psychiatrist is uniquely qualified to assess, diagnose, and treat mental and physical conditions. A geropsychiatrist has additional training and experience with older adults.

Psychological Needs

Basic needs that will vary, depending on the specific theory and on an individual person's "state of mind and being" that generally include: security or safety, effectiveness and control, positive identity and self-esteem, positive connection and esteem for and trust in others, autonomy and self-trust, comprehension of reality or world view, spirituality, including transcendence of the self.

Psychologist

A psychologist is a doctoral-level specialist in psychology, licensed by the State to practice professional psychology (e.g., assess and treat), teach psychology as a scholarly discipline, or conduct research. Psychologists are usually qualified to provide psychotherapy, administer psychological and educational tests, and diagnose and treat mental and psychiatric disorders.

Public Health

The science dealing with the protection and improvement of community health by organized community effort.

Pulmonary

Having to do with the lungs.

Pulmonary Disease

Any disease affecting the lungs, primarily chronic bronchitis and emphysema.

Pulse

The rhythmic contraction and expansion of an artery due to the surge of blood from the beat of the heart. The pulse is most often measured by feeling the arteries of the wrist. There is also a pulse, although far weaker, in veins.

Q**Quadrant**

One-quarter of a divided whole; any of the four areas into which a plane is divided by two orthogonal coordinate axes.

Quadriplegia

Paralysis of all four limbs, both arms and both legs, as from a high spinal cord accident or stroke.

Quality of Care

A measure of the degree to which delivered health services meet established professional standards and judgments of value to the consumer.

R**RACE**

Depending on who is using the acronym, RACE stands for Rescue, Alert (Alarm), Contain & Extinguish (or Evacuate).

Radial

A line drawn along a vector; the side of the radius which is the arm bone nearest the thumb.

Radial Pulse

The most common pulse site located on the wrist directly under the thumb.

Ramps

A flat surfaced platform used to eliminate or reduce "steps" thereby enabling persons with disabilities or physical weakness to walk up or down without having to use the steps. Ramps are also used to permit wheelchair and bed access into and out of vehicles and restroom facilities or on to scales.

Range of Motion

The full spectrum of a joint's possible movements. The shoulder joint has a greater range of motion than any other joint in the human body. The ability of a joint to go through all its normal movements. Range-of-motion exercises help increase or maintain flexibility and movement in muscles, tendons, ligaments, and joints.

Reality Orientation

A process used to determine how aware a resident or patient may be of their present location and surroundings by asking specific questions such as name, date, place, time, etc.; a process used to assist residents and patients who suffer from memory loss by making them more aware of concepts such as name, date, place, time.

Reddened/Discolored Area

A noticeable change in the condition and integrity of the skin that is indicative of swelling and could possibly be a serious sign of a decubitus ulcer. May also be associated with a bruise, a cut, a scratch or a skin condition such as dermatitis.

Rectal Temperature

A temperature obtained from the rectum (anus). A rectal temperature is 0.5°F (0.3°C) to 1°F (0.6°C) higher than an oral temperature.

Registered Nurse (RN)

A nurse who has graduated from a formal program of nursing education and has been licensed by an appropriate state authority. RNs are the most highly educated of nurses with the widest scope of responsibility, including all aspects of nursing care. RNs can be graduated from one of three educational programs: two-year associate degree program, three-year hospital diploma program, or four-year baccalaureate program.

Rehabilitation

The combined and coordinated use of medical, social, educational, and vocational measures for training or retaining individuals disabled by disease or injury to the highest possible level of functional ability. Several different types of rehabilitation are distinguished: vocational, social, psychological, medical, and educational.

Rehabilitation Services

Services designed to improve/restore a person's functioning; includes physical therapy, occupational therapy, and/or speech therapy. May be provided at home or in long-term care facilities. May be covered in part by Medicare.

Reimbursement

The process by which health care providers receive payment for their services. Because of the nature of the health care environment, providers are often reimbursed by third parties who insure and represent patients.

Religious Service

Services that are held for the purpose of practicing religious beliefs and customs.

Reminiscing

Thinking and talking about the "old days" when a person was younger; a conversation about an event that happened long-ago.

Renal Failure

Kidney failure; inability of the kidney to purify and filter the blood. Renal failure can be a complication of acute liver failure (Hepatorenal syndrome), usually due to diabetes or other diseases. When severe, it requires mechanical filtration (dialysis) or a kidney transplant.

Reporting Abnormal Changes

A key nursing skill wherein the nurse aide reports any problems noted with the residents (breathing, heart rate, new incontinences) to the charge nurse.

Reporting Observations

A key nursing skill wherein the nurse aide provides the nurse, doctor or CareTracker data management system with a report regarding the present physical and mental condition of a patient or resident, or any changes that have occurred in their physical or mental condition. Specific procedures may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

Reposition Residents

A nursing skill wherein the nurse aide actually assists the patient/resident with changing the position of their body in order to avoid bed sores, ulcers or skin damage, and to provide greater comfort. Specific procedures may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

Resident

A person, who has been officially checked in to a medical facility for treatment or care, and which, will be residing in the medical facility for an extended period of time.

Resident Abuse

Either physical or mental abuse of a resident or patient in a long term care facility or nursing home by either facility staff members or by other residents. Must be reported to the charge nurse.

Resident Behavior

How a resident is behaving, acting and responding while in a medical facility.

Resident Belongings

Items and objects that are the personal property of a resident or patient; belonging to the resident or patient.

Resident Hotels

Resident Hotels, while similar to the concept of the retirement home, usually provide fewer services. They are typically supportive senior environments. Residents must be able to care for themselves and not be dependent on the facility.

Resident Independence

A medical concept that promotes the practice of helping a resident or patient do as much as they can by themselves and for themselves; independence from needing assistance.

Resident Rights

A series of legal rights established by the Code of Federal Regulations that establish what a resident or patient in a long term care facility or a nursing home can not be denied. These must be posted in the facility. Also see Resident's Bill of Rights.

Resident Unit

The room or area where the resident resides within the medical facility.

Residential Care

The provision of room, board and personal care. Residential care falls between the nursing care delivered in skilled and intermediate care facilities and the assistance provided through social services. It can be broadly defined as the provision of 24-hour supervision of individuals who, because of old age or impairments, necessarily need assistance with the activities of daily living.

Resident's Bill of Rights

A series of legal rights established by the Code of Federal Regulations that establish what a resident or patient in a long term care facility or a nursing home can not be denied. These generally include: 1) The Right to exercise one's own rights; 2) Right to privacy and confidentiality; 3) Right to information about their care; 4) Right to choose; 5) Right to notification of change; 6)

Right to protection of a resident's personal funds; 7) Right to express grievances; 8) Transfer and discharge rights; 9) Right to be free from restraint and abuse.

Resident's Chart

See Medical Chart

Resident's Environment

The room or area where the resident resides within the medical facility; the area within the facility where residents are allowed to socialize and interact with one another.

Resident's Families

Persons related to a patient or resident by either blood or marriage.

Respectful Treatment

A key nursing skill wherein a person is listened to and his/her experience, perceptions, and desires are truly heard and taken into account. Respectful treatment means that the health care provider respects what the individual is.

Respirations

The process of breathing air into the lungs and exhaling air out of the lungs.

Respiratory Condition

The status of the pulmonary system's ability to inhale and exhale; a medical condition that affects the pulmonary system's ability to inhale and exhale.

Respiratory Isolation

Designed to prevent transmission of infectious diseases over short distances through the air. Direct and indirect contact transmission may occur but is infrequent. Diseases requiring respiratory isolation include measles, mumps, and rubella. Private room is indicated although patients infected with the same organism may share a room. Masks are indicated for those who come in close contact with the patient. Gowns and gloves are not indicated. Hands must be washed after touching the patient or contaminated articles, and contaminated articles should be discarded or bagged and labeled.

Respiratory Therapy

The diagnostic evaluation, management, and treatment of the care of patients with deficiencies and abnormalities in the cardiopulmonary (heart-lung) system.

Respite Care

Service in which trained professionals or volunteers come into the home to provide short-term care (from a few hours to a few days) for an older person to allow caregivers some time away from their caregiving role.

Responding to Resident

A nursing skill wherein the nurse responds to a resident or patient who has triggered a call button to summon assistance; talking to a resident.

Restorative Care

A planned, systematic program that focuses on helping the patient obtain and maintain the highest level of function. Specific procedures may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

Restrained Resident

A patient or resident who has been placed in restraints for their own safety and the safety of the medical team.

Restraints

Devices used to ensure safety by restricting and controlling a person's movement. Many facilities are "restraint free" or use alternative methods to help modify behavior.

Resuscitation

Procedures for the restoration of heart rhythm and maintenance of blood flow and breathing following cardiac or respiratory arrest. Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), is emergency first aid for an unconscious person on whom breathing and pulse cannot be detected.

Retirement Home (Facility)

Retirement Homes are special complexes of apartments or private homes that provide a supportive environment for seniors, but allow residents to remain somewhat independent. Residents have their own living space (apartment or room) and services provided vary greatly. Examples of services are meals in a central location, laundry facilities, housekeeping, bathing assistance, dressing and assistance taking medication.

Right to Refuse Care

A legal right of an individual to refuse medical care.

Risk Management

Service in which trained professionals or volunteers come into the home to provide short-term care (from a few hours to a few days) for an older person to allow caregivers some time away from their caregiving role.

S**Safety and Security**

The human need for personal safety, economic security, comfort and peace, free from any threats. According to Maslow's Theory, as humans meet their basic needs, they seek to satisfy successively higher needs that occupy a set hierarchy. Within Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the need for safety and security is just below the need for social belonging and just above the need for physical survival.

Safety Procedures

Guidelines, policies, procedures and rules intended to promote personal safety by educating people about the "dos-and-don'ts" of use and operation. Specific procedures may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

SARS

Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome.

Scabies

Infestation of the skin by the human itch mite, *Sarcoptes scabiei*. The initial symptoms of scabies are red, raised bumps that are intensely itchy.

Scale

Any mechanical or digital device used to obtain the weight of a person or an object in either pounds or kilograms (1 pound equals 0.453 kilograms). A scale is also a "metering system of measurement" such as a thermometer. The different measuring scales used are Celsius, Fahrenheit, Kelvin or Absolute.

Screening

The use of quick procedures to differentiate apparently well persons who have a disease or a high risk of disease from those who probably do not have the disease.

Secondary Care

Services provided by medical specialists who generally do not have first contact with patients (e.g., cardiologist, urologists, dermatologists).

Secretions

Substances produced by and released from cells.

Security

The state of being safe and free from danger or injury.

Seizure

Temporary abnormal electrophysiologic phenomena of the brain, resulting in abnormal synchronization of electrical neuronal activity. They can manifest as an alteration in mental state, tonic or clonic movements, and various other symptoms. They are due to temporary abnormal electrical activity of a group of brain cells. The medical syndrome of recurrent, unprovoked seizures is termed epilepsy, but some seizures may occur in people who do not have epilepsy.

Self Actualization

Truth, justice, wisdom and meaning; Challenging and creative projects and learning at a higher level. According to Maslow's Theory, as humans meet their basic needs, they seek to satisfy successively higher needs that occupy a set hierarchy. Within Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the need for self actualization is at the peak of the pyramid, just above the need for self esteem.

Self Esteem

Recognition of strength, intelligence and important projects; A person's self-image at an emotional level involving needs for prestige and status, often circumventing reason and logic. The term differs from ego in that the ego is a more artificial aspect; one can remain highly egotistical, while underneath have very low self-esteem. According to Maslow's Theory, as humans meet their basic needs, they seek to satisfy successively higher needs that occupy a set hierarchy. Within Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the need for self esteem is just below the need for self actualization and just above the need for social belonging.

Senility

The generalized characterization of progressive decline in mental functioning as a condition of the aging process. Within geriatric medicine, this term has limited meaning and is often substituted for the diagnosis of senile dementia and/or senile psychosis.

Senior Center

Provides a variety of on-site programs for older adults including recreation, socialization, congregate meals, and some health services. Usually a good source of information about area programs and services.

Sensory System

Part of the nervous system responsible for processing sensory information. A sensory system consists of sensory receptors, neural pathways, and parts of the brain involved in sensory perception. Commonly recognized sensory systems are those for vision, hearing, somatic sensation (touch), taste and olfaction (smell).

Service Plan

(Also called care plan or treatment plan.) Written document which outlines the types and frequency of the long-term care services that a consumer receives. It may include treatment goals for him or her for a specified time period.

Severe Tremors

A repeated involuntary and rhythmic shaking or movement in the muscles of parts of the body, most often the hands, feet, jaw, tongue, and head.

Severity of Illness

A risk prediction system to correlate the "seriousness" of a disease in a particular patient with the statistically "expected" outcome (e.g., mortality, morbidity, efficiency of care).

Sexual Advances

The intentional expression of sexual desires to another person using body language and /or words.

Sexual Expression

The need to express or the act of expressing sexual desires to another person using body language and /or words.

Sexual Needs

The sexual desires that a person has and experiences.

Sexuality

Social differences linked to sexual identity and behavior; the interplay of physical, psychological, social, emotional, and spiritual makeup of an individual. It also encompasses gender, gender role, gender identity, sexual orientation, sexual preference, and social norms as they affect physical, emotional, and spiritual life.

Shared Housing

This is designed for people seeking alternative living arrangement by sharing household responsibilities and reduced living costs.

Sharps

Any medical instrument capable of cutting or puncturing the skin, such as scalpel blades, hypodermic needles, syringes (with or without the attached needle), Pasteur pipettes, blood vials, needles with attached tubing, and culture dishes used in animal

or human patient care or treatment, or in medical, research or industrial laboratories. Also included are other types of broken or unbroken glassware that were in contact with infectious agents, such as used slides and cover slips, and unused hypodermic and suture needles, syringes, and scalpel blades.

Sharps Container

The appropriate biohazard container or receptacle in to which any medical instrument capable of cutting or puncturing the skin, such as scalpel blades, hypodermic needles, syringes (with or without the attached needle), Pasteur pipettes, blood vials, needles with attached tubing, and culture dishes is permanently discarded to ensure infection control and medical asepsis.

Shearing of Skin

Shearing occurs when skin slides over muscle and bone causing friction, abrasion, and a decrease in circulation; friction or pressure on the skin from rubbing or dragging it across surfaces.

Side Rails

A safety device that attaches to the side of a bed, a chair or a wash tub that prevents a person from "rolling off"; a device intended to provide safety, security and support by ensuring that a patient or resident can not fall out of a bed or chair. Specific procedures may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

Simple Fracture

An uncomplicated fracture in which the broken bones do not pierce the skin.

Sitz Bath

A special tub where a person sits in a few inches of warm water to help relieve discomfort of hemorrhoids or anal fissures. Often mounted on a toilet or in a special chair. Can also be a special perineal bath to help reduce infection of the perineum. It improves circulation and decreases swelling of the perineum. Specific procedures may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

Skilled Care

"Higher level" of care (such as injections, catheterizations, and dressing changes) provided by trained medical professionals, including nurses, doctors, and physical therapist.

Skilled Nursing Care

Daily nursing and rehabilitative care that can be performed only by or under the supervision of, skilled medical personnel.

Skilled Nursing Facility (SNF)

Facility that is certified by Medicare to provide 24-hour nursing care and rehabilitation services in addition to other medical services. (See nursing home.)

Skin Breakdown

The deterioration of skin, usually at pressure points but can also occur as a result of skin shearing. Warmth and moisture add to skin breakdown as do dermatological conditions and age.

Skin Integrity

The ability of the skin to maintain fluid balance and its protective functions and quality.

Small Intestine

The part of the digestive tract that is located between the stomach and the large intestine where most digestion occurs. It measures about 20 feet and includes the duodenum, jejunum, and ileum.

Smoking

Use of cigarettes or cigars.

Social Belonging

The human need for acceptance, group membership, association, love and affection. According to Maslow's Theory, as humans meet their basic needs, they seek to satisfy successively higher needs that occupy a set hierarchy. Within Maslow's hierarchy of needs, the need for social belonging is just below the need for self esteem and just above the need for safety and security.

Social Health Maintenance Organization (SHMO)

A managed system of health and long-term care services geared toward an elderly client population. Under this model, a single provider entity assumes responsibility for a full range of acute inpatient, ambulatory, rehabilitative, extended home health and personal care services under a fixed budget which is determined prospectively. Elderly people who reside in the target service area are voluntarily enrolled. Once enrolled, individuals are obligated to receive all SHMO covered services through SHMO providers, similar to the operation of a medical model health maintenance organization (HMO).

Social Needs

Self respect, achievement, attention, recognition and reputation.

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)

A system of federally provided payments to eligible workers (and, in some cases, their families) when they are unable to continue working because of a disability. Benefits begin with the sixth full month of disability and continue until the individual is capable of substantial gainful activity.

Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) Services

(Formerly known as Title XX services.) Grants given to states under the Social Security Act which fund limited amounts of social services for people of all ages (including some in-home services, abuse prevention services, and more).

Social Well Being

The condition of feeling comfortable with, and accepted by, society, including the people you work with, the people you live with and the people you socialize with; having your social and emotional needs fulfilled.

Social Worker

A licensed professional who gives families emotional support, help in adjusting to hospitalization, help planning for hospital discharge, and referral to community resources.

Soiled Linen

Linens that have been soiled or dirtied by feces, blood, body fluids or by any spilled substance such as foods or liquids, or by any other contaminant such as dirt, soil, grass, ink, paint, chemicals, soap, etc.

Special Care Units

Long-term care facility units with services specifically for persons with Alzheimer's Disease, dementia, head injuries, or other disorders.

Specimen

An example of a substance collected to represent that type or class of substances in testing, analyses or for evidence; a bit of tissue or blood or urine that is taken for diagnostic purposes.

Speech Therapy

Designed to help restore speech through exercises. May be covered by Medicare.

Spend-Down

Medicaid financial eligibility requirements are strict, and may require beneficiaries to spend down/use up assets or income until they reach the eligibility level.

Spilled Food

Any food product that has accidentally or intentionally been poured, thrown, splashed or spilled on to another surface where it does not belong and therefore needs to be "cleaned-up".

Spills

Any substance that has accidentally or intentionally been poured, thrown, splashed or spilled on to another surface where it does not belong and therefore needs to be "cleaned-up".

Spiritual Needs

The personal desires of a resident or patient to freely practice their religious or spiritual beliefs.

Spousal Impoverishment

Federal regulations preserve some income and assets for the spouse of a nursing home resident whose stay is covered by Medicaid.

Standard Error

In statistics, the standard error is defined as the standard deviation of an estimate. That is, multiple measurements of a given value will generally group around the mean (or average) value in a normal distribution. The shape of this distribution is known as the standard error.

Standard Precautions

Precautions used in a medical facility that involve "protection as needed" to implement infection control and to protect both the medical team and the residents from microorganisms and body fluids that may carry disease.

Standard/Universal Precautions

Precautions used in a medical facility that involve "protection as needed" to implement infection control and to protect both the medical team and the residents from microorganisms and body fluids that may carry disease.

State Survey

A survey or poll conducted state-wide by any organization; a survey or poll conducted by a State government agency or organization.

State Unit on Aging

Authorized by the Older Americans Act. Each state has an office at the state level which administers the plan for service to the aged and coordinates programs for the aged with other state offices.

Stealing

The intentional act of taking something that belongs to another person without that person's knowledge and permission.

Sterilization

The elimination of microorganisms and their propagules and other living organisms from soil, containers, etc. by means of heat (AUTOCLAVING), radiation, or chemicals, or removed by filtration; the act of rendering something free from living cells.

Stethoscope

An acoustic medical instrument used to listen to the heart and other sounds in the body, including breathing, intestines and the blood flow in arteries and veins.

Stool Specimen

A sample of a patient or resident's feces obtained for use in testing and examination.

Stress

Mental or physical tension that results from physical, emotional, or chemical causes.

Strict Isolation

Designed to prevent transmission of highly contagious or virulent infections that may be spread by air or contact. Recommended for chickenpox as well as for viral haemorrhagic fevers. A private room is required and gowns, masks, and gloves must be worn before entry. Hands must be washed after leaving the room and contaminated articles should be discarded or bagged and labeled before being sent for decontamination and reprocessing.

Stroke

The sudden death of some brain cells due to a lack of oxygen when the blood flow to the brain is impaired by blockage or rupture of an artery to the brain. A stroke is also called a cerebrovascular accident or, for short, a CVA.

Strong Side

Opposite of the affected side or weak side; the side not affected and/or retaining the most strength.

Subacute Care

(Also called post-acute care or transitional care.) Type of short-term care provided by many long-term care facilities and hospitals which may include rehabilitation services, specialized care for certain conditions (such as stroke and diabetes) and/or post-surgical care and other services associated with the transition between the hospital and home. Residents on these

units often have been hospitalized recently and typically have more complicated medical needs. The goal of subacute care is to discharge residents to their homes or to a lower level of care.

Subjective

Influenced by personal opinion.

Suicide

From the Latin phrase “sui caedere” meaning “to kill oneself”; the act of intentionally ending one's own life.

Sundowning

Refers to people who become increasingly confused at the end of the day and into the night. It is not a disease. It's a symptom that usually occurs in people who have dementia, such as Alzheimer's disease. The cause is not known.

Supine

With the back or dorsal surface downward. A person who is supine is lying face up. The opposite of prone.

Supplemental Feedings

Providing food and liquids to a patient or resident that are in addition to their standard meals. Supplemental feedings are used to boost recovery from certain ailments or from surgery by providing extra vitamins or minerals or calories in general.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

A program of support for low-income aged, blind and disabled persons, established by Title XVI of the Social Security Act. SSI replaced state welfare programs for the aged, blind and disabled in 1972, with a federally administered program

Support Groups

Groups of people who share a common bond (e.g., caregivers) who come together on a regular basis to share problems and experiences. May be sponsored by social service agencies, senior centers, religious organizations, as well as organizations such as the Alzheimer's Association.

Suspected Abuse

Signs that are seen either on a patient's body or through a patient's behavior that suggest they have been subjected to either physical or mental abuse while at home or in a long term care facility or a nursing home (by either facility staff members, by family members, or by other residents). Must be reported to the charge nurse.

Survey

An investigation in which information is systematically collected.

Swallowing Difficulties

Difficulty swallowing all or some food, liquids or medicines because of surgery, an ailment or damage to the throat.

Swelling

When tissue becomes swollen due to an accumulation of fluid in the tissue; the enlargement of organs caused by accumulation of excess fluid in tissues, called edema. It can occur throughout the body (generalized), or only some part or organ is affected (localized); the retention of abnormal levels of fluid in the body.

Systolic

The blood pressure when the heart is contracting. It is specifically the maximum arterial pressure during contraction of the left ventricle of the heart. The time at which ventricular contraction occurs is called systole.

T**Tachycardia**

A rapid heart rate, usually defined as greater than 100 beats per minute. The tachycardias include sinus tachycardia, paroxysmal atrial tachycardia (PAT), and ventricular tachycardia.

Technology Assessment

A comprehensive form of policy research that examines the technical, economic, and social consequences of technology applications.

TED Hose (T.E.D.)

Stands for Thrombo-Embolic Deterrent; long, tight fitting "socks" that keep mild pressure on the legs to prevent blood from clotting. They prevent blood from sitting idle in the legs, which can lead to clots. T.E.D. hose stockings should be worn during inactive times after surgery, on airplanes, or often if the patient has a history of poor circulation. When wearing the stockings, special care should be taken not to allow them to bunch up or bind behind the knees or around the thighs. The hose should be kept as smooth as possible. Specific procedures may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

Telephone Etiquette

A nursing skill wherein the nurse answers the facility's telephone in a clear, friendly and respectful manner and tone. Specific procedures may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

Tendons

The cords of fibrous connective tissue that attach muscles to bones.

Terminal Illness

A sickness or disease that cannot be stopped or cured and, after a period of time, will cause the person's death.

Thermometers

An instrument used to measure temperature. Usually available in liquid scale, analog dial and digital versions.

Thickened Liquids

Liquids that have been intentionally thickened (per order) to make swallowing easier by residents and patients that have difficulty with some liquids.

Threatening Resident

A resident in a long term care facility or nursing home that is angry and defiant and whom conveys clear indications or gestures that they will become violent or cause harm to a member of the medical team or to other residents or patients. Any resident that issues a verbal or body language warning that they intend to cause harm to another person or object. Specific procedures for dealing with such a resident may vary, depending on the policies defined by each facility.

TIA

Transient Ischemic Attack; A "warning stroke" or "mini-stroke" that produces stroke-like symptoms but no lasting damage.

Title III Services

Services provided to individuals age 60 and older which are funded under Title III of the Older Americans Act. Include: congregate and home-delivered meals, supportive services (e.g., transportation, information and referral, legal assistance, and more), in-home services (e.g., homemaker services, personal care, chore services, and more), and health promotion/disease prevention services (e.g., health screenings, exercise programs, and more). (See also Older Americans Act.)

Title XIX (Medicaid)

federal and state-funded program of medical assistance to low-income individuals of all ages. There are income eligibility requirements for Medicaid.

Title XVIII (Medicare)

Federal health insurance program for persons age 65 and over (and certain disabled persons under age 65). Consists of 2 parts: Part A (hospital insurance) and Part B (optional medical insurance which covers physicians' services and outpatient care in part and which requires beneficiaries to pay a monthly premium).

Title XX Services

(Now known as Social Services Block Grant services.) Grants given to states under the Social Security Act which fund limited amounts of social services for people of all ages (including some in-home services, abuse prevention services, and more).

Toenails

The nails located on the toes.

Toileting Schedule

A system of scheduled restroom visits to help increase a resident's independence through better control of toileting.

TPR

Temperature, Pulse, Respirations.

Trachea

A tube-like portion of the breathing or "respiratory" tract that connects the "voice box" (larynx) with the bronchial parts of the lungs.

Transferring

The process of moving a resident from one location to another location.

Transitional Care

(Also called subacute care or post-acute care.) Type of short-term care provided by many long-term care facilities and hospitals which may include rehabilitation services, specialized care for certain conditions (such as stroke and diabetes) and/or post-surgical care and other services associated with the transition between the hospital and home. Residents on these units often have been hospitalized recently and typically have more complicated medical needs. The goal of subacute care is to discharge residents to their homes or to a lower level of care.

Transporting Food

The process of moving food safely from one location to another location.

Transportation Services

(Also called escort services.) Provides transportation for older adults to services and appointments. May use bus, taxi, volunteer drivers, or van services that can accommodate wheelchairs and persons with other special needs.

Treating Residents with Respect

A key nursing skill wherein the nurse treats the patient/resident with a professional level of respect and care, irregardless of the nurse's personal feelings about the resident or the resident's own behavior.

Treatment Plan

(Also called care plan or service plan.) Written document which outlines the types and frequency of the long-term care services that a consumer receives. It may include treatment goals for him or her for a specified time period.

Tub Bath

The bathing and washing of a resident or patient in an actual tub.

Tube Feeding

A method of providing nutrition to people who cannot sufficiently obtain calories by eating or to those who cannot eat because they have difficulty swallowing. Tubes which transport nutritional formulas can be inserted into the stomach (G-tubes), through the nose and into the stomach (NG-tubes), or through the nose and into the small intestine (NJ tubes). The NG and NJ tubes are considered to be temporary and the G tube is considered more permanent but it can be removed.

Twice Daily

Written and symbolized as "bid" which is Latin for "bis in die" meaning "twice daily".

Tympanic Temperature

Temperature obtained from the ear; An ear (tympanic) temperature is 0.5°F (0.3°C) to 1°F (0.6°C) higher than an oral temperature.

U**Ulcers**

An open sore on the skin surface or on the inside lining of a body part, such as the mouth or stomach, characterized by the disintegration of the tissue and often the discharge of pus. People with diabetes may get ulcers from minor scrapes on the feet or legs, from cuts that heal slowly, or from the rubbing of shoes that do not fit well. Ulcers can become infected.

Unaffected Side

The opposite of the "affected side". When one side has been weakened by a stroke or injury, (affected side), the opposite side is the unaffected side.

Uncompensated Care

Service provided by physicians and hospitals for which no payment is received from the patient or from third party payers.

Unconscious

Not conscious or capable of interaction. A state that appears like deep sleep when a person loses all awareness of their surroundings following an injury or illness. Lacking capacity for sensory perception.

Unconscious Resident

A resident or patient that is not conscious or capable of interaction and who is in a state that appears like deep sleep without awareness of their surroundings

Uncovered Food

Food that is exposed to air borne contaminants and temperature change and thereby prone to spoiling. Food left uncovered for a length of time can pose a serious health risk to patients and residents.

Underinsured

People with public or private insurance policies that do not cover all necessary medical services, resulting in out-of-pocket expenses that exceed their ability to pay.

Undue Hardship

With respect to the provision of accommodation for an individual with a disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act--significant difficulty or expense, considered in light of the employer's financial resources, facilities, workforce, and business operations.

Uniform

Clothing of distinctive design (and often color) worn by members of a particular group as a means of identification.

Universal Precautions

Standard precautions used in a medical facility that involve "protection as needed" to implement infection control.

Unopened Mail

Mail delivered to a person by the US Postal Service or by hand that has not yet been opened and inspected by the intended recipient.

Unsteady

Not being steady or stable and thereby prone to dizziness, falling and other accidents.

Urethra

The tube that carries urine from the bladder to outside the body.

Urethral

Relating to the urethra.

Urinary Catheter

Any tube system placed in the body to drain and collect urine from the bladder.

Urinary Catheter Bag

The bag associated with a urinary catheter that is used to collect and contain the urine from the bladder.

Urinary System

The urinary system represents the functional and anatomic aspects of the kidneys, ureters, and bladder.

Urinary Tract

Passageway from the pelvis of the kidney to the urinary orifice through the ureters, bladder, and urethra. There is an upper urinary tract (2 kidneys and 2 ureters) and a lower urinary tract (bladder, sphincters and urethra); The organs of the body that produce and discharge urine. These include the kidneys, ureters, bladder, and urethra.

Urinary Tract Infection (UTI)

An infection in the urinary system that begins when microorganisms cling to the opening of the urethra (the canal from the bladder) and begin to multiply. Most UTIs are due to one type of bacteria, E. (Escherichia) coli, a normal denizen of the colon. An infection in the urethra leads to inflammation called urethritis. From there bacteria may move up, causing a bladder infection (cystitis) and if the infection is not treated promptly, bacteria may go up the ureters to infect the kidneys (pyelonephritis).

Urination

Urination, also called micturition, is the process of disposing urine from the urinary bladder through the urethra to the outside of the body. The process of urination is usually under voluntary control. When control over urination is lost or absent, this is called urinary incontinence.

Urine

The waste products filtered from the blood and combined with excess water by the kidneys. Urine is made by the kidneys, stored in the bladder, and leaves the body through the urethra.

V**Validation Therapy**

A humanistic approach used to give disoriented old-old people, eighty years and older, an opportunity to resolve their life's unfinished conflicts by encouraging them to express their feelings. This approach emphasizes the relationship between the old-old person and the caregiver by focusing on empathy, acceptance, and acknowledgment. Four stages of disorientation, ranging from mild to severe, are described on the basis of emotional and physical characteristics; A developmental therapy attempting to understand what emotions patients with Alzheimer's disease are expressing, and respond in a way that allows patients to express their emotions freely and validate/support their feelings.

Varicose Veins

A dilated (widened) tortuous (twisting) vein, usually involving a superficial vein in the leg, often associated with incompetency of the valves in the vein. These visible and bulging veins are often associated with symptoms such as tired, heavy, or aching limbs. In severe cases, varicose veins can rupture, or open sores (varicose ulcers) can form on the skin.

Veins

Muscular blood vessels that carry blood toward the heart. In contrast, arteries carry blood away from the heart.

Ventilation

The exchange of air between the lungs and the atmosphere so that oxygen can be exchanged for carbon dioxide in the alveoli (the tiny air sacs in the lungs). In pulmonary medicine, a distinction is made between pulmonary and alveolar ventilation. Pulmonary ventilation refers to the total exchange of gas. Alveolar ventilation refers only to the effective ventilation within the alveoli.

Visiting Nurse Association (VNA)

A voluntary health agency which provides nursing and other services in the home. Basic services include health supervision, education and counseling; bedside care; and the carrying out of physicians' orders. Personnel include nurses and home health aides who are trained for specific tasks of personal bedside care. These agencies had their origin in the visiting or district nursing provided to sick poor in their homes by voluntary agencies.

Visually Impaired

Eyesight that is substantially degraded or absent; dim-sighted- having greatly reduced vision; persons who have some difficulty seeing with one or two eyes even when wearing glasses.

Vital Signs

A key nursing skill wherein the the physical signs that are indicative of life (pulse rate, respiratory rate, blood pressure and pain) are properly obtained and recorded for a patient/resident.

Vital Statistics

Statistics relating to births (natality), deaths (mortality), marriages, health, and disease (morbidity).

Vitamins

Key organic compounds that function as metabolic regulators in the body. Classified as water soluble or fat soluble. Vitamins cannot be manufactured by the body and must be obtained through diet or supplements. Vitamins A, D, E, and K are fat soluble while vitamin C (ascorbic acid) and the vitamin B complex group are water soluble.

Vomiting

The act of ejecting vomitus from the mouth. Also known as "throwing-up" or "barfing".

Vomitus

Matter from the stomach (vomit) that has come up into and may be ejected beyond the mouth, due to the act of vomiting. When vomitus is reddish or the color of coffee grounds, it may mean there is serious internal bleeding. The reddish color may herald fresh blood and dark blood may betoken blood that has been digested.

W**Walker**

A metal or plastic device that provides a person with the proper support needed to stand and walk by holding rails with the hands and then lifting or rolling the device to permit movement. Usually has either four rubber feet or a combination of feet and wheels.

Wandering Resident

A resident or patient in a long term care facility or nursing home who tends to aimlessly move from one place to another without any apparent reason; a person who must be watched and closely monitored because they tend to wander off.

Water Faucets

The device mounted on a sink or wall that permits water to stream-out when handles are turned to the "on" position.

Water Temperature

The temperature of the water (98.6 to 103 degrees is often considered the best comfortable use range).

Weakness

Lacking strength to accomplish a task as easily as a healthy person would be able to do. May be caused by an injury, physical disability, degeneration of bone mass and muscle, or by a simple lack of energy due to an illness or from not eating properly.

Weak Side

Same as the "affected side".

Weighing Resident

A nursing skill wherein the nurse actually assists the patient/resident with determining their actual weight by using a scale.

Weight

The mass or heaviness of a person, object or substance; the actual point on a measurement scale that indicates how much a person, object or substance actually weighs. Weight measurements are commonly expressed as metric grams and kilograms, or as ounces and pounds.

Well Balanced Meal

A meal meeting all the nutritional requirements that a person needs.

Wellness

A dynamic state of physical, mental, and social well-being; a way of life which equips the individual to realize the full potential of his or her capabilities and to overcome and compensate for weaknesses; a lifestyle which recognizes the importance of nutrition, physical fitness, stress reduction, and self-responsibility.

Wheelchair Safety

Guidelines, policies, procedures and rules intended to promote safer use of wheelchairs by educating people about the "dos-and-don'ts" of wheelchair use and operation.

White Blood Cells

Cells in the blood that fight infection; part of the immune system; the blood cells involved in the destruction of viruses, bacteria,

and fungi. The majority of white blood cells are produced in the bone marrow, where they outnumber red blood cells by two to one. However, in the blood stream, there are about 600 red blood cells for every white blood cell. There are several types of white blood cells including lymphocytes and Leukocytes.

Withdrawal

Symptoms that occur after chronic use of a drug is reduced or stopped; the physical and/or psychological state experienced by a person when certain substances or medications are discontinued rapidly. When an addictive behavior is stopped or an addictive substance is withdrawn from use, withdrawal symptoms almost always follow.

Workers' Compensation Program

State-mandated system under which employers assume the cost of medical treatment and wage losses for employees who suffer job-related illnesses or injuries, regardless of who is at fault. In return, employees are generally prohibited from suing employers, even if the disabling event was due to employer negligence. U.S. government employees, harbor workers, and railroad workers are not covered by state workers' compensation laws, but instead by various federally administered laws.

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