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Patients who are inflicted with chronic diseases or disabling conditions, those who have long term care needs, and even seniors often find themselves having difficulties in performing their basic activities of daily living (ADLs). ADLs are the everyday self-care activities which include tasks such as bathing, grooming, personal hygiene, dressing and undressing, feeding, functional transfers, and toileting to name a few. Patients who require support in these tasks are the ones who need aid from assisted living facilities.

Assisted living communities can either be a simple residence for care or can be a part of a care program in a continuing care retirement community (CCRC). These places have a homey atmosphere that is why they are often a popular care setting choice for both patients and their families. They are really close to the description of a “second home” as facilities feature apartment-like designs with studio or one-bedroom options.

As mentioned earlier, assisted living can be appropriate for seniors. Elders who have experienced health problems that led to their requirement of additional help in their ADLs can experience great benefits when they enter such facilities. Care is available and can be obtained whenever it is needed. An additional benefit is that, they can reside in a place wherein they can enjoy social life with little responsibilities. This means they can keep their independence while being cared for.

How do assisted living facilities differ from independent living and nursing homes?

Independent living is regarded as a part of continuum care wherein assisted living is considered as the next level to it. Communities for this type of setting helps residents develop and maintain self-determination and self-respect so they can look at disability in a more positive way. Residents can perform their usual activities independently with less assistance. However, this form of housing is not just for those who have physical disabilities but also for seniors. Moreover, similar to assisted living, independent living communities also have apartment, single home or townhouse styles.

Now, as for nursing homes, this care setting perfectly suits people who require skilled medical care but do not want to be confined in the hospital. Patients are cared for by skilled nurses 24 hours a day. Unlike the care in assisted living, the care provided in nursing homes is medical including physical, speech and occupational therapy--- the complex medical services. Also, they offer medication assistance which can either be or not be allowed in some assisted living communities.

Assisted living facilities can be the alternative choice for eldercare. Seniors who no longer see independent living as appropriate, and similarly do not require 24-hour medical care by a nursing home can choose this care setting which promises to promote independence and dignity.

Understanding the difference between various care settings and the services they provide can also help families decide which place of care will best suit their loved one’s needs. Deciding on such matter is quite difficult and involves a lot of emotions. Be sure to include your elder or whoever your patient is in deciding wherein they would like to receive care.

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