

ASSESSING THE RISK OF LIVING ALONE

This list is designed to assess people already identified as having memory loss and problems living alone.

If one of these situations is present, the person shouldn't be alone and needs help immediately:

- Weight loss of more than six pounds or 10 percent of body weight in six months, loose clothing, evidence of wasting, such as protruding bones.
- Agitated paranoia, hallucinations, delusions, suicidal thoughts, aggression.
- Weapons present, especially loaded.
- Evidence of fire or misuse of appliances, such as placing aluminum in a microwave.
- No food in house or only rancid food.
- Falling, especially when the person remains down more than two hours. Also, evidence of injuries, unexplained bruises, substance use.
- Medication mistakes or poor care for serious conditions.
- Reports of that the person is neglecting basic care, such as medical treatment, or is being abused.
- Repeated emergency room visits, hospitalizations, physical complaints.
- Evidence of domestic violence, including the person injuring a caregiver.
- Frequent calls to police or emergency services.
- Wandering outside the home.
- Eviction notice has been served.

These behaviors could be classified as A or B behaviors, depending on how severe they seem to the reviewer:

- Malfunctioning plumbing, such as lack of water or a stopped-up toilet, when the person has caused the problem or neglected to get it fixed.
- Thermostat set inappropriately for weather conditions.
- Chronic anxiety or worry, panic attacks, depression.
- Unsafe driving with refusal to stop.
- Law enforcement officers ask that the person be evaluated because of repeated calls.

If two or more of these behaviors are present, you may wait a few weeks, but should work toward providing care in the home or moving the person to another living situation:

- Poorly managed continence.
- Repeated calls to the family to ask what to do next or express concern about planned activities.
- Dirty or infested household that poses health risk.
- Accumulation of garbage.
- Food stored inappropriately, such as ice cream in a pantry.
- Person is being exploited by someone, such as a neighbor or relative.
- Resists personal care for long time periods.

These behaviors could be classified as B or C behaviors, depending on how severe they seem to the reviewer:

- Person makes statements about needing to move or not being able to cope.
- Neighbors or others complain about person's dependence on them.
- Community members, such as neighbors, advise that help is needed.

If some of these behaviors are present, especially three or more, consider giving help and reevaluate monthly:

- Socially isolated behavior, such as sitting all day in front of TV.
- Losing belongings, hiding things.
- Poor grooming, soiled clothing, wearing the same clothing all the time.
- Post-it notes throughout house.