6.7: VI Glossary

Adult day centers: Care that offers people with dementia and other chronic illnesses the opportunity to be social and to participate in activities in a safe environment, while also giving their caregivers the opportunity to work, run errands, or take a much-needed break.

Ageism: The stereotyping and discrimination against individuals or groups on the basis of their age. Ageism can take many forms, including prejudicial attitudes, discriminatory practices, or institutional policies and practices that perpetuate stereotypical beliefs.

Alzheimer’s disease: An irreversible, progressive brain disorder that slowly destroys memory and thinking skills and eventually the ability to carry out the simplest tasks.

Cognition: A term used to describe our ability to think.

Cognitive impairment: Impairment in mental processes that drive how an individual understands and acts in the world, affecting the acquisition of information and knowledge.

Delirium: An acute state of cognitive impairment that typically occurs suddenly due to a physiological cause, such as infection, hypoxia, electrolyte imbalances, drug effects, or other acute brain injury.

Dementia: A chronic condition of impaired cognition, caused by brain disease or injury, marked by personality changes, memory deficits, and impaired reasoning. Dementia can be caused by a group of conditions, such as Alzheimer’s disease, vascular dementia, frontal-temporal dementia, and Lewy body disease. It is gradual, progressive, and irreversible.

Depression: A brain disorder with a variety of causes, including genetic, biological, environmental, and psychological
factors.

**Development:** Biological changes, as well as social and cognitive changes, that occur continuously throughout our lives.

**Growth:** Physical changes that occur during the development of an individual beginning at the time of conception.

**Hospice care:** Care that focuses on providing comfort and dignity at the end of life. It involves care and support services that can be of great benefit to people in the final stages of dementia and to their families.

**Intellectual disability:** A diagnostic term that describes intellectual and adaptive functioning deficits identified during the developmental period prior to the age 18.

**Respite care:** Care provided at home (by a volunteer or paid service) or in a care setting, such as adult day centers or residential facilities, that allows the caregiver to take a much-needed break.

**Sundowning:** Increased confusion, anxiety, agitation, pacing, or disorientation in patients with dementia that typically begins at dusk and continues throughout the night.