

Independent Living

What is Independent Living?

Independent Living is living on your own, in your own apartment or house, as opposed to living in a group home or other residential provider. You take care of your own “activities of daily living” (ADLs) such as your health, hygiene, grooming, shopping, money management, laundry, home maintenance and meal preparation.

Many people with brain injuries do live independently and take care of all their own needs, while others may receive assistance with some activities of daily living. Programs such as Independent Living Skills programs (ILS) can support individuals to live in the community, but provide assistance based on the person’s needs. Examples of this assistance includes: receiving help to plan meals, manage budgets, learn first aid and medication usage, develop personal grooming skills, and provide education on public transportation and other community resources. ILS workers work closely with the people they serve, their families and referral sources to develop services that meet individual needs, and individual schedules.

If you are considering living on your own you will need to determine how able you are to do all the things that will be required and expected of you in the community. Are you able to manage your money to pay your bills (like rent, food, medicine, insurance, etc...), find a safe place to live and keep it clean and organized, manage the household chores of groceries, laundry, meal preparation and so on? Would you be able to do some, but not all of these things unless you had some help?

To be eligible for ILS programs you will need to discuss this with your Case Manager or the hospital Social Worker. There are many ILS providers to choose from and you will need to carefully select the provider that is right for you. Some things to consider may include: cost, frequency of visits, and extent of services or full package vs. specific needs.

Many organizations have programs that teach independent living skills to persons with disabilities to support their ability to live as independently as possible. Some independent living skills providers can visit the current residence of a person with brain injury to assist him or her with maximizing and/or maintaining independence and self-direction. Staff may provide assistance with budgeting, meal planning and leisure activities. Other providers operate programs out of an office or social service agency.