

Resident and Family Engagement in Nursing Home Quality

Transforming the lives of nursing home residents through continuous attention to quality of care and quality of life



Family and resident engagement means that families and residents are involved in activities intended to enhance quality of life, quality of care and safety for residents.

What Are Quality Activities?

Quality activities in nursing homes vary but usually include:

- **Identifying problems** as well as areas for improvement in the delivery of care and services;
- **Identifying and addressing safety concerns** in the environment; and
- **Making improvements** that will enhance the quality of life for residents in the nursing home.

Why Should You Be Involved In Your Nursing Home Quality Activities?

- Being involved ensures that nursing home staff understand and respect your choices, dignity, and rights to purposeful living.
- Family members are the primary advocates for loved ones in nursing homes.
- Engagement supports your participation in decisions about the best approaches to your care.
- Engagement facilitates you getting to know the nursing home staff and their roles, and facilitates the staff getting to know you, your needs and your preferences.

Tips for Effective Engagement

- **Speak regularly** with nursing home staff and leadership.
- **Share your ideas** for improvement as well as concerns.
- **Offer praise** to staff and leadership for a job well done or for positive changes made.
- **Share concerns** with nursing home staff as soon as they arise.
- **Offer potential solutions**, and make sure they are concrete and simply stated.
- **Participate**, when invited, in nursing home committees such as dietary, safety, and/or quality assurance committee meetings.
- **Participate** in resident and family councils.
- **Direct your concerns** to a person capable of addressing them such as the charge nurse, director of nursing, or nursing home administrator.
For example, you notice that family council meetings are held during the day, limiting participation of working family members. Report this situation to the nursing home administrator and offer alternative meeting times.
- **Participate in care plan development.** Residents, their representatives and those advocates invited by the resident should be active members of the health care team, and it is your right to participate in care planning. If you or your advocate have not been invited, ask your charge nurse.

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Being Engaged in Nursing Home Quality



..... Direct your concerns to a person capable of addressing them such as **the unit nurse**.

If staff do not act on your concerns, take those concerns to facility leadership, such as the **director of nursing, or the nursing home administrator**.



..... If leadership does not act on your concerns, contact **your State Survey Agency or your Ombudsman**.



Effective Approaches to Overcoming Obstacles to Engagement

- Know your rights, and refer to them when voicing your concerns or suggestions. <http://theconsumervoice.org/issues/recipients/nursing-home-residents/residents-rights>
- Be patient as staff consider how to make engagement work in your facility; change takes time.
- If staff do not act on your concerns, take those concerns to facility leadership.
- If leadership does not act on your concerns, contact the State Survey Agency <https://www.medicare.gov/NursingHomeCompare/Resources/State-Websites.htm> or your state Ombudsman Program http://theconsumervoice.org/get_help
- If you are not comfortable identifying yourself, complaints or concerns can be made anonymously to your State Survey Agency or Ombudsman.
- Consider presenting the issue with other residents through your resident or family council.

Additional Resources

Residents Rights Information from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)

CMS has a brief listing of your rights as a nursing home resident or family member: <http://www.medicare.gov/NursingHomeCompare/Resources/ResidentRights.html?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1>

Resources from Advancing Excellence for nursing home residents, families, and friends:

<https://www.nhqualitycampaign.org/participantConsumer.aspx>

Resources for residents in long-term care from the National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care:

<http://theconsumervoice.org/issues/recipients>

Resources for family members of long-term care residents from the National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care:

<http://theconsumervoice.org/issues/family>