

IMPROVEMENT GUIDE

Courtesy and Respect

Courtesy can be understood as polite behavior and mannerisms. Being courteous does not require admiration for the individual, it merely promotes polite social interactions. Respect can be defined as admiration for someone because of their qualities or achievements. Respect comes from within us as we view the positive aspects and the amazing traits of other people. It is these traits that make us respect people. When we are courteous, we are not bothered about the character, qualities, or achievements of the individual, but in respect it is these features that make us respect that individual. These are the differences between courtesy and respect.

Improvement Recommendations

1. Clearly identify respect for residents and families as a value in the organization's mission, vision, and values statements:
 - An employee's esteem for the elderly needs to be determined at the time of hire and determination of such should be part of the hiring process.
 - The value of respect needs to be discussed throughout orientation and ongoing education, modeled by supervisors and managers, and reinforced through in-service training.
 - Reinforce behaviors which exhibit respect.
 - Coach employees, who appear to need it, relative to respectful behavior and speech.

2. Ensure behaviors that exemplify courtesy, and respect are reinforced, and all staff members are accountable to adhere to these behaviors:
 - Train staff on how to be courteous and respectful to residents and families, including the following:
 - Take complaints seriously.
 - Avoid talking down to or patronizing residents.
 - Use the resident's name of choice.
 - Respect each resident's personal space.
 - Keep personal information private.
 - Taking time to understand a person who has trouble articulating clearly.
 - Taking time to speak clearly to those who have trouble hearing.
 - Be patient when a resident requires additional time to:

- Transfer or walk.
 - Make themselves understood.
 - Eat and drink.
 - Bathe and dress.
 - Respond to a question.
 - Make a decision.
 - Understanding differing languages and accents.
 - Observe and provide feedback to staff based on findings during observation or reviewing resident survey responses.
 - Ensuring respect for residents and families is a key competency on an annual performance review.
 - Orient all staff members on how to interact with residents and families:
 - Residents appear agitated or unsettled.
 - When the family demonstrates concern for their loved one or is angry.
 - During times of sadness and death.
 - Tense situation (e.g., resident to resident, resident to staff, resident to family).
 - Provide staff with education in communication and building interpersonal relationships. For example, demonstrating empathy is an important component of respect.
3. Keep all aspects of staff-to-staff communication professional, especially when residents/patients are present:
- Use appropriate grammar (not slang) and avoid acronyms.
 - Keep conversations focused on the residents/patients.
 - Acknowledge preferences (e.g., bathing, rising, sleeping, eating at the preferred time).
 - Follow up on residents' requests.
4. Establish privacy practices that show respect for residents:
- Avoid discussing residents with others not involved in their care.
 - Do not discuss resident issues in public areas.
 - Provide all care, especially personal care, in a manner which ensures resident privacy.
 - Make efforts to provide privacy during residents' visits with spouses, family, and friends.
 - Help residents talk on the phone in a private area.
 - Monitor staff activities to ensure adherence to privacy policies and practices.
 - Ensure all staff are oriented to the privacy practices of the facility.
5. Ensure residents and families are provided with the opportunity to participate in resident and family councils.
6. Establish a process that ensures resolution of resident/family complaints and communication to them of the outcome in a timely manner.

Guided Discussion Topics

Conducting a guided discussion with a focus group or panel of employees, family members, and residents promotes collaboration, diverse viewpoints, problem-solving, engagement, clarity, alignment, and knowledge sharing—all of which contribute to the development of more effective and well-rounded action plans.

The questions below will assist in a guided discussion to help drill down to the root issues that may be impacting residents and family members based on the facility's most recent survey results. NRC Health recommends conducting guided discussions post survey on topics that the facility wishes to address for improvement.

DEMONSTRATING THE MISSION

1. How does your team demonstrate the mission, vision, and values of your organization through their interactions with families and residents?
2. Do staff try to maintain a positive attitude and demeanor?
3. How do you ensure that your behavior and communication is always professional, respectful, and demonstrates the values of our organization?

COURTEOUS INTERACTIONS

4. What type of training do you provide staff members on professional and courteous interactions and communication with residents and families?
5. Are there specific skills or behaviors that are emphasized during this training, such as active listening, speaking clearly, and showing patience with residents and families?
6. What opportunities are provided to staff to receive feedback and coaching on their interactions with residents and families?

RESPECTFUL COMMUNICATION

7. What policies or guidelines are in place that outline appropriate communication between staff members when residents or families are present?
8. How do you ensure that all staff members understand the importance of modeling professional and respectful communication between each other, regardless of if residents or families are present?
9. How do you encourage staff members to speak up if they observe inappropriate communication between their colleagues when residents or families are present?

RESPECTING PRIVACY

10. How do you ensure that staff are properly trained to understand and uphold privacy policies for residents and families?
11. How do you ensure that staff are not accessing or discussing resident/family information without a legitimate reason, such as their own personal interest or curiosity?

12. How do you respond if a resident or family member expresses concerns about their privacy being compromised?

EQUAL RESPECT

13. How do you ensure that you are treating all residents and their families with equal respect and courtesy, regardless of their background or circumstances?
14. Do you try to understand and accommodate individual preferences and needs?
15. How do you avoid making assumptions or judgements based on a resident's or family's background or circumstances?

RESPECTFUL LANGUAGE

16. How do you ensure that you are not patronizing or condescending towards residents or families?
17. Do you avoid using language or behavior that is overly familiar or infantilizing?
18. Do you ensure that you are providing clear and concise information that is easy to understand?

CONTINUING IMPROVEMENT

19. How do you continually improve your approach to showing residents and families courtesy and respect when interacting with them?
20. How does leadership (executive director, administrator) set the example for respectfulness in interactions with residents, families, and staff?
21. How do staff leverage the survey feedback received to identify and improve their behavior and interactions with residents and families?