IMPROVEMENT GUIDE

Responsiveness to Suggestions and Concerns

Understanding among staff that responsiveness to family and resident suggestions and concerns is everyone's responsibility.

Improvement Recommendations

1. Empower staff to resolve concerns – whoever hears the complaint owns it to ensure a resolution.
2. Protocols are established and taught to staff regarding how they should deal with a complaint. For example:

    *   Lost dentures: "We will have to check with the laundry and get back to you within 24 hours."
    *   Lost sweater: "We will replace the sweater."

3. Openly discuss issues that have been raised at family and resident council meetings, addressed to staff or management, appear in the comments from experience surveys, or are heard through other means such as suggestion box.

    *   Identify solutions which will address the systemic issues of the problem.
    *   Assess the solutions to determine if the issue has been resolved.
    *   Ensure all staff from all shifts are aware of issues and changes put in place.
    *   Inform those who made the complaint of the resolution including announcing at resident and family council meetings and newsletters.
        o   Use the language of the question, "In an effort to be responsive to your suggestions, we have made the following changes…"

4. Train staff to be aware of non-verbal communication (eye contact, facial expressions, tone of voice, etc.)

5. Proactively communicate expectations. Problems can be solved before they arise by communicating appropriate expectations immediately.

    *   Frequency of physical visits.
    *   Meals – how and when they are served – "ordering out" – family meals etc.
    *   Nursing staffing patterns
    *   Inform residents and families when policies and changes impact their routine.

6. Family and residents want to receive feedback when they submit a complaint or concern, it is essential to provide follow-up:

- Action(s) to be taken.
- Solutions to be offered.
- Reinforcement of commitment to care of their resident.
- Timely responses from management (24-48 hours).
- Individual personalized attention.
- An apology when mistakes were made.
- Value for the money they are paying for services.
- Ensure there will be no retribution rather appreciation for informing of issue.
- Use the preferred communication method for responding to families (phone, email, text).

7. Make management accessible to residents and families:

- Being in the areas where residents and families are located.
- Having an approachable attitude.
- Reach out to the residents and families and do not wait for them to approach you:
    o "How are you doing today? Is there anything more we could be doing for you?"
- Creating a culture which encourages listening to families and residents.
- Being available (evenings, weekends) and identifying hours available.

8. Healthcare staff conduct rounding on resident:

- Develop training for rounding expectations.
- Track feedback. Follow up with staff, residents, and families about concerns raised by residents to ensure they are satisfied with the solution.
- Role play of resident rounding.
- Establish a standard process to follow including mental, emotional, and physical preparation (e.g., smiling, making eye contact with resident, introducing themselves to resident and family member).
    o Healthcare staff need to schedule time in their day to conduct resident rounds when families are present.
    o Ask open ended questions:
        ▪ "How are things going?"
        ▪ "What can we do to make you more comfortable?"
        ▪ "How can we improve our care and services?"
- Have managers visit resident rooms to speak to residents or observe the interactions between residents and staff and/or family. It is helpful if managers are given suggestions for how to introduce themselves, possible questions to ask the residents and family members, and ideas for closing comments. Using their own words will help to make these ideas sincere when speaking to residents.
- Reward and recognize staff who are observed actively listening to residents and families or whose residents have indicated they have really understood their concerns.

9. Utilize survey data to proactively identify areas for improvement – this will demonstrate your

responsiveness.

- Use comments to supplement data.
- Identify trends and patterns in the comments.

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.

DOCUMENTATION

1. Do you have a system in place that makes it easy to receive, document and address a resident or family's suggestions or concerns?
2. Who is responsible for receiving and documenting these suggestions and concerns?
3. Are there any specific channels or systems in place for tracking and following up on suggestions and concerns?

COMMUNICATION

4. When addressing suggestions or concerns, is a definitive timeframe provided on when a response or resolution will be provided?
5. How are residents and their families informed of the status of their suggestions or concerns?
6. How are residents and their families involved in the follow-up process?

PRIORITIZATION

7. How do you prioritize and address suggestions and concerns that require immediate attention?
8. Are there specific criteria used to determine which items require immediate attention?
9. How are staff members made aware of these priorities?

LEADERSHIP INVOLVEMENT

10. How does leadership (Executive Director, Administrator, Community Leader) demonstrate their commitment to addressing a resident or family concern?
11. Is community leadership easily accessible to families and residents to voice their concerns, and what additional channels can be used for quick access to leadership?
12. How does leadership monitor the effectiveness of the facility's approach to addressing suggestions and concerns, and what steps are taken to improve this process?

TRAINING

13. What training or resources are provided to staff to better address, prioritize, and resolve suggestions and concerns?
14. Are staff trained in how to effectively communicate (both verbal and non-verbal) with residents and families, especially in difficult situations?
15. Are there any resources, such as templates or scripts, provided to staff to help them address common suggestions or concerns?

SUPPORT

16. How do you manage situations where a suggestion or concern cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of the resident or their family?
17. How are residents and their families informed when a suggestion or concern cannot be resolved to their satisfaction?
18. How are residents and families supported throughout this process?

CONTINUED IMPROVEMENT

19. What steps do you take to continually improve your approach to addressing suggestions or concerns?
20. Are there any regular reviews or evaluations of your approach to addressing suggestions or concerns?
21. How are staff encouraged to seek out feedback and suggestions from residents and families?