



HOW TO MAKE RESIDENT COUNCILS DYNAMIC:

In Just a Few Simple Steps



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INTRODUCTION

This toolkit was developed with input from residents, families and staff members. Its purpose is to guide nursing homes and their residents in creating a structure where voices are heard and resident councils are dynamic.



The contents include guidance for nursing homes as they adapt to the changes found in the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' regulation called the Final Rule. The Final Rule requires nursing homes to ensure that residents and their families have a voice in improvement, quality and designing the care provided. This resource paves a clear path for your nursing home to follow to meet this requirement while improving outcomes.

Additionally, this toolkit will help staff collaborate with residents and families to produce positive results. The practices and suggestions can help you improve care together and avoid the “us” versus “them” approach to resident council meetings.

Visit us at www.qualityinsights-qin.org for more information about improving the quality of care in your nursing home.

Steps For Nursing Homes to Implement	
How to Involve Residents & Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include information on the resident council in the admission package, get commitments from families and residents to attend at least one meeting • Use technology: Skype, GoToMeeting, teleconferences • Organize improvement work in a sub-committee meeting format. Once residents see real improvement happening as a result, they will be more apt to participate • Give councils the power to improve their lives and make suggestions that are reviewed by leadership, who makes an earnest attempt to implement ideas and suggestions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For example, the power to expand dining choices – host a “food show” where vendors can showcase their newest offerings and residents can vote on their favorites ○ Invite residents to help design activities, share their interests, discuss what is working and what they would like to have • Assess the effectiveness of your current council – see page 5
How to Make the Councils More Effective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a meeting technique that levels the playing field, ensuring that everyone has an equal voice and that all participants can offer input, which allows you to get ideas from everyone as all have a chance to talk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Use the Learning Circle Approach – see page 6 ○ Use the Rose and Thorn Problem-Solving Technique – see page 7 • Leadership is truly engaged so residents know that their ideas are reviewed and considered. Prompt feedback is provided – even when suggestions aren’t implemented <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Facilitate open discussion on solutions and options ○ Provide quick feedback to the resident council; this gives them a chance to modify their solutions to problems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ These actions promote partnership to improvement • Use a prioritization worksheet to choose topics for discussion
Eliminate the “Us” Versus “Them” Mentality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicitly create norms for the council that include collaboration and partnership • Show flexibility in handling grievances – allow for this discussion to be positive so that it provides opportunities for improvement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ May want to develop solutions in a sub-committee format ○ Allow staff to have real-time collaboration • Have the resident council be part of the employee recognition program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Council can provide feedback on what care is working, what is not working, and how care could be modified to be better ○ Provide feedback on new pilot project(s), new processes, focus on the system of care delivery ○ Council can identify star staff members
Tie QAPI & Resident Councils Together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow resident councils to assist you with your performance improvement projects and QAPI • Residents and families can make improvement work easier <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increases likelihood of success ○ Identifies best practices that work ○ Share results with residents, such as a deficiency-free survey ○ Can pilot educational tools and resources for effectiveness



Steps For Residents to Take	
Get Involved!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a commitment to attend regularly and get your family members to attend <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Encourage other residents to attend – be the cheerleader ○ Invite everyone, then invite them again! • Include opportunities to work on real change in the work or agenda of these meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Do we want to expand our food choices? ○ Does bath time and bathing have an opportunity to improve how that care is delivered? ○ How can the residents get involved in providing activities, not just being the recipient of them?
How to Make the Councils More Effective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you want more structure from your council, so the meetings stay on track and you get real improvement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop the agenda ahead of time and make sure it addresses everyone’s ideas on what the council wants to tackle next • Be willing to try something new in the way that you problem solve <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Learning Circles ○ Rose and Thorn Problem-Solving Approach • Facilitate with meaningful family involvement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Look at the big picture – how can we make care better for everyone? • Focus on the positive, not the punitive
Eliminate the “Us” Versus “Them” Mentality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss issues and areas to improve as one section of your meeting, or move that discussion to another format or sub-committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clarify and understand the committee’s purpose ○ Understand the roles of facilitator, department heads and leadership working together ○ Show flexibility on how to address grievances, perhaps as a sub-committee • Be willing to have those good “growing” discussions as a group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is participating in the council a rewarding experience? If not, why? ○ Is our council accomplishing anything? If not, how can we change that? ○ What is our vision of the perfect day? What is the staff’s vision of the perfect day? How are they different? • Use the council to tell leadership when staff go above and beyond in providing good quality care
Tie QAPI & Resident Councils Together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be willing to try new tools, or new treatments in care and give feedback if it is working or not • Serve on the QAPI committee in the nursing home, willing to help make improvement efforts effective • Pick a project that is meaningful for both leadership and residents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Call bells and wait times ○ Activities – can they have more variety?

RESIDENT COUNCIL ASSESSMENT

Ask all resident council members to complete an assessment, such as the following, in order to evaluate its effectiveness and potential areas for improvement.

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
The Resident Council has a documented vision, goal and purpose that is shared with all members						
The Resident Council does a good job of recruiting new members, both residents and family members						
The Resident Council welcomes new members with an orientation packet and explanation of its purpose						
The Resident Council accomplishes change and improves care for our residents						
The Resident Council has a good communication channel with leadership (e.g., administrator, DON, CEO, etc.)						
Leadership responds to the input of the Resident Council and provides feedback on recommendations						
The Resident Council is diverse and is a good representation of our nursing home population						
The Resident Council allows for free and open discussion among all members when problems are discussed						
The Resident Council is involved with QAPI at our facility and a member of council attends quality meetings when warranted						
Our nursing home does a good job updating staff, family and residents on quality and improvement initiatives						

LEARNING CIRCLES

Open sharing learning circles – learning from each other

Goal: To devise solutions or develop ideas through mutual respect and understanding, incorporating the nursing home's diverse groups. The circles are to include residents, direct care givers, families, management, all staffing departments and anyone with a willingness to enrich the residents' lives.

Description: Learning circles provide a structured conversation method that ensures everyone is part of the sharing. In a learning circle, each person can speak once before anyone speaks again. In the first round of speaking, participants share their own experiences and perspectives rather than commenting on what they've heard from others. Once everyone has had an opportunity to speak and have their ideas heard, the group is free to explore and discuss what they have heard from each other.



Learning Circle Steps:

1. Sit in a circle without obstructions or barriers
2. Choose a facilitator who captures everyone's ideas, perhaps using an easel or chalkboard
3. Limit each person to keep his or her initial comments to approximately two minutes
4. Invite anyone who feels so moved to start the conversation by sharing his or her own experience or ideas for a solution
5. Ask the person to the right or left to speak next, sharing their own experiences in approximately two minutes
6. Follow around the circle with each person speaking in turn, about his or her own experience, for about two minutes
7. If anyone wants to pass, they can
8. After the group has gone full circle, the facilitator will go back to anyone who passed and ask if they would like to speak
9. Open the conversation up for anyone to add to what they have said, ask each other questions, comment on what they have heard and generally engage in discussion

Discussion: Often in a group discussion, some people feel more comfortable jumping in while others tend to shy away from participation. Through the use of a learning circle, the group gets the benefit of everyone's experience and perspective.

Time Needed: For a group of eight people, allot at least 30 minutes to allow for everyone to speak as well as for continued discussion and exploration of what has been said.

ROSE, THORN, BUD PROBLEM-SOLVING TECHNIQUE

How to identify the positive, negative or potential for each solution

This problem-solving technique uses a simple method to evaluate potential solutions from all points of view. The group can analyze a proposed solution, data or situation to identify one positive idea (rose), one negative idea (thorn), and one new goal or insight (bud). This technique can help the group stay focused and plan as they formulate the next steps.

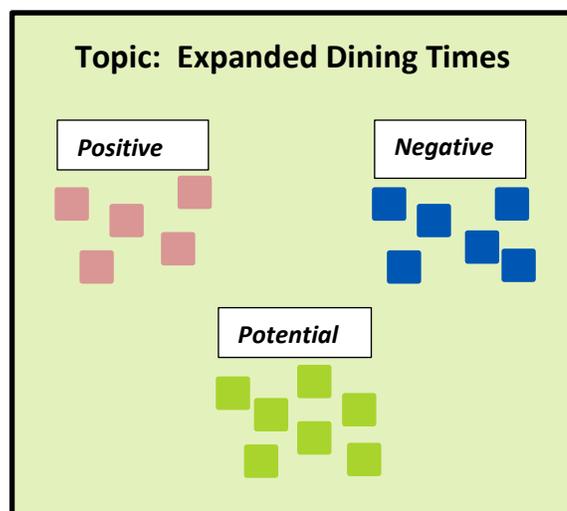


To begin, give each group member three different colored sticky notes and a pen so that they can capture their ideas. For this example, the colors will be pink (positive), blue (negative) and green (potential).

Post the problem to be solved on a board, easel or wall. Each member of the group can write his or her thoughts on a colored sticky note and post it on the board/easel/wall for all participants to see. Ideas and thoughts on the sticky notes will be roses, thorns or buds and grouped together in each category. Once everyone has posted their ideas, begin a discussion that captures everyone's thoughts, concerns and plans for a solution.

Problem-Solving Steps:

- Assemble a diverse group of participants
- Give each participant a pen and three sticky note pads in different colors
- Explain the topic and the color key.
 - Rose = Pink (indicates things that are positive)
 - Bud = Green (indicates things that have potential)
 - Thorn = Blue (indicates things that are negative)
- Instruct each person to write down and post as many ideas as possible for each category
- Ideally, each participant will post at least one sticky note for each category



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For more information about the concepts included in this toolkit, we recommend the following additional resources:

Organization	Resource Link(s)
<p>Planetree is a mission-based not-for-profit that partners with healthcare organizations around the world and across the care continuum to transform how care is delivered.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website: http://planetree.org/ • Long-Term Care Improvement Guide – http://planetree.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/LTC%20Improvement%20Guide%20For%20Download.pdf
<p>Action Pact offers several free resources that can assist with transforming an institution into a true home and restoring the pleasures of daily life to your elders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website: http://actionpact.com/
<p>The National Consumer Voice for Quality Long Term Care is a leading national voice representing consumers in issues related to long-term care, helping to ensure that consumers are empowered to advocate for themselves.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website: http://theconsumervoice.org/ • Final Rule (in simplified language): http://theconsumervoice.org/uploads/files/issues/summary-of-key-changes-effective-phase-1-final.pdf
<p>The Pioneer Network has a primary goal is to move eldercare to a place where all care and support are person-directed, not system-directed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website: https://www.pioneernetwork.net/
<p>The Institute for Patient and Family Centered Care seeks to advance the understanding and practice of patient- and family-centered care. In partnership with patients, families, and health care professionals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toolkit: http://www.ipfcc.org/bestpractices/better-together-partnering.html
<p>The Eden Alternative is a culture change organization.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consumer guide: http://www.edenalt.org/resources/consumer-guide/



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