

***Enhancing Quality of Life
through
Consistent Assignment***

**Massachusetts
Culture Change Coalition
2010 Conference**

PHI

Training & Organizational Development Services
Building Skills for Relationship-Centered Care

Consistent Assignment: The Primary Goal

***Provide consistency,
continuity and familiarity
in caregiving
that will result in
establishing strong
relationships
between residents and staff.***



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A Consistent Assignment: What is it?

- Residents see the same caregivers or team of caregivers almost every time they are on working.
- Many residents are more comfortable with caregivers who know and understand their personal preferences and caregiving needs.
- Caregiving staff are assigned to one area of the home and to one group of residents.
- It is the key to providing resident-centered care because relationships are central to quality care for residents and families.

Consistent Assignment: Why is it Important?

- Residents are more comfortable with caregivers who know and understand their personal preferences and needs.
- Staff are more familiar with the preferences and routines of their residents allowing for a more predictable daily experience

Benefits of Consistent Assignment

For Residents

- Residents and their families appreciate consistency of care and communication.
- Knowledge of the resident often reduces wound rates and other quality indicators.
- Relationship results in greater sense of well-being.
- Makes intimate aspects of care feel more comfortable.
- Residents feel more secure knowing they will receive care from someone they know.
- Residents with dementia feel more comfortable with familiar caregiver faces.
- Problems can be addressed by staff who are closer to the resident
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For Caregivers

- Staff see how their skill, experience and knowledge makes a difference in the resident's lives.
- Work becomes easier as the staff are more accustomed to the resident's schedule, needs and wishes.
- Caregivers build greater confidence in themselves as they are thoroughly familiar with each resident on their assignment.
- Caregivers are more likely to understand and respond to residents with dementia as they get to know them better.
- Caregivers are able to experience greater job satisfaction through these relationships, absences are often reduced.
- Empowers staff related to problem-solving capabilities.



Challenges to Implementation

For the Caregivers

- Staff apprehension
- Changing acuity levels and census
- Changing schedules to fill an assignment
- Being assigned residents that have challenging behavior
- Questioning the 'fairness' or equality of the assignments

For the Organization

- Reviewing Call Out policies and associated issues
- Training new staff
- Room Changes and the consistent caregiver
- Not able to move staff to cover needs in other areas of the building as easily



An Example of Success:

The Edgewood Centre, Portsmouth, New Hampshire

- 100% of Resident and Family members rated us 'good' or 'great' with regard to "honoring resident choice" and "staff to resident friendships"
- 76% reduction in High Risk pressure ulcers
- Quality Indicators: Flag only for tube feeding and cognitive impairment
- 94% decrease in the number of lost work days and a 98% reduction in cost of claims (\$213,000 to \$5,000)
- Decrease in the use of psychotropic medication

Next Steps

- Talk to your staff – engage in a participatory process around this change
- Review Policies that would impact this issue – see what needs to be added or modified
- Talk to your residents – ask them how they would like to see this implemented
- Survey the staff related to job satisfaction before and after implementation so that you can measure your success and modify as needed
- Calculate acuity levels for fairness – on all three shifts

Consistent Assignment: Questions to Consider

1. How does familiarity and routine help increase comfort and competence?
2. How important are relationships to residents?
3. How important are relationships to caregivers?
4. How important are relationships to family members?
5. How important are relationships to quality care?
6. How does teamwork help improve care?
7. Would you like different people toileting and bathing you each day?
8. Would you like having a different team each day?
9. What do residents experience when they have frequent changes in their caregivers?
10. What do staff experience when their assignment is routinely changed?
11. How does having their assignment routinely changed affect staff's relationship to their work?
12. How would staff knowledge of resident's preferences and choices be different if they had consistent assignments?

Enhancing Quality of Life through Consistent Assignment

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Additional Sources of information included in this presentation:

Advancing Excellence in America's Nursing Homes

<http://nhqualitycampaign.org>

Change Ideas for Consistent Assignment

<http://qsource.org/NHQI/Consistent%20Assignment.pdf>

