

Working with Residents Groups

Fact Sheet 1 Types and Purposes of Residents Groups

Resident Groups are defined as any group of residents,
relatives or friends that come together

to discuss residents' issues whether it be formal or informal.

TYPES OF MEETINGS

- ❖ Informal resident meetings with all residents attending. Relatives and friends may also attend to support or represent the residents. These can be with or without office bearers.
- ❖ Formally elected committees where those elected meet together with staff to discuss issues arising within the facility.
- ❖ A range of different types of groups can be used for different purposes.

OFFICE BEARERS; DO YOU NEED THEM?

- ❖ The need for office bearers will depend on who is the facilitator/leader of the group. As a minimum groups need to have a facilitator/leader/chairperson and someone to take minutes.
- ❖ The choice of facilitator should preferably be made by the residents, after all it is their group.
- ❖ Where the residents hand over this choice to the facility, they may appoint a staff member such as activities director, to take on this role, or an independent facilitator can be appointed.
- ❖ The success of the meeting lies in the skill of the leader/facilitator to support resident participation in the group and the attitude of the facility to embrace a resident focus.
- ❖ The higher the proportion of residents with dementia the more friends and relatives are needed to be involved as advocates for residents.

THE PURPOSE OF GROUPS

- ❖ Best practice would suggest that having stated aims and objectives help to clarify the direction and purpose of the group.
- ❖ The continual change of membership, which occurs in residents groups in aged care facilities, necessitates having some statement of purpose for new arrivals.
- ❖ Different purpose statements can be used for different types of groups.

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Reasons for Having a Resident Group

- ✓ Resident participation is a significant way of improving the quality of life for residents in aged care facilities;
- ✓ To provide an opportunity for residents to use their talents and wisdom;
- ✓ To promote a spirit of affiliation and cooperation within the home as a whole by working towards common goals;
- ✓ To improve communication between residents in the home;
- ✓ To improve communication between residents and staff, supervisors/directors of nursing and management;
- ✓ As an information channel for residents;
- ✓ As feedback for staff and management, so they can accurately assess which services need improving and which are satisfactory to residents;
- ✓ As a forum where residents can share ideas, suggestions, opinions and problems which can influence management decisions and ensure they are more responsive to residents' needs;
- ✓ As a forum the discussion of residents concerns;
- ✓ As a decision-making forum so residents can maintain as far as possible, their control, independence and autonomy;
- ✓ To allow residents to exercise their rights to self-determination and freedom of choice with regard to services within the home;
- ✓ To protect and maintain the rights of residents generally;
- ✓ As a way of off-setting negative effects of institutionalisation by increasing self esteem and confidence, motivation and responsibility, feeling of achievement and communication and social skills;
- ✓ As a means of channelling residents' negative feelings and frustration with institutionalised living into constructive suggestions and actions;
- ✓ To improve the attitude of staff by allowing them to see residents' skills, knowledge and experience;
- ✓ As a support mechanism for the home with regard to government and community pressure;
- ✓ Above all as a means of improving quality of life of residents in the home.

(Residential Care Rights)