

Working with Residents Groups

Fact Sheet 2

Planning The Group

The increasing frailty of aged care facility residents means that planning for participation needs to be flexible and creative.

FLEXIBLE ATTITUDES

- ❖ Think in terms of what residents can accomplish rather than feel disappointed about what residents can't do.
- ❖ Treat the Residents Group as an advisory council. Involve them in assessing their home's quality from their perspective, one issue at a time.
- ❖ Allow time for listening, reporting, follow up. Hurrying can result in confusion and discourage discussion.
- ❖ Encourage participation by building up residents' confidence, status, potential, and mental stimulation and tap into unused skills.
- ❖ "Seize the moment." Allow flexibility in your own agenda so you can take the opportunity when residents are having a good day, to plan an event. Seek ideas then and there.

FLEXIBLE PLANNING

- ❖ Choose an outreach person (resident) who can call privately on other residents to ask if they have concerns or ideas they would like to have raised at the Residents Group.
- ❖ Reluctant residents may be encouraged to attend.
- ❖ Break up into small groups to stimulate discussion.
- ❖ Plan ahead how you might get each person to share their ideas and experiences.
- ❖ Concentrate on care issues which are important to frail residents.
- ❖ Practise decision making if the group seems reluctant to make choices. Involve them in small decisions first and reinforce their judgement.
- ❖ Use visual and audio communication to stimulate conversation going
- ❖ Choose a time, day and private place for meetings which are conducive to participation and being heard.
- ❖ Suggestions could be canvassed prior to Residents Group meeting to give time for residents to think about issues.
- ❖ Schedule small group lunches or afternoon tea for residents with administrative staff, board members, cook, etc. to facilitate communication.

(Residential Care Rights)

Creativity to Stimulate Ideas and Participation

DISCUSSION TOPICS CAN STIMULATE MORE PARTICIPATION.

WARM UP TOPICS – build trust and friendship and bring a group together:

- ❖ Is there enough music in your life?
- ❖ Tell us where you grew up.
- ❖ Choose a new activity you'd like to do.
- ❖ Where would you like a friend to take you out to?
- ❖ What do you remember about your grandparents?
- ❖ How has another resident helped you?

PERSPECTIVE TOPICS – to ascertain residents' thoughts about certain experiences:

- ❖ What makes you laugh?
- ❖ What makes for a bad day?
- ❖ What is the best part of the day? Why?
- ❖ What do people do that upsets you?
- ❖ What may be the best way to react?
- ❖ How could you be happier?

ACTION TOPICS – which may stimulate activity planning:

- ❖ What makes a good day for you?
- ❖ What is the slowest time of the day for you?
- ❖ What would you need to get out more?
- ❖ Who would you like to invite to your home?
- ❖ Suggest one improvement for your home.
- ❖ What could we do for each other?
- ❖ Do you understand why you take your tablets?
- ❖ What do you tell your family you need?

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