Recognizing the Wisdom of Elders:
Residents as Decision Makers,
Effective Resident Councils

Carmen Bowman, BSW, MHS, Regulator turned Educator

EDU-CATERING
Catering Education for
Compliance and Culture Change in LTC
303-981-7228 carmen@edu-catering.com

Among the Kyrgyz, elders are revered and honored. This man is an “akulak” – a “white beard.” Once a man reaches this status he is considered to possess the wisdom which younger men lack.
China – Students go to the nursing home to learn how to become wise

Don't let wisdom be warehoused
We go to “get wisdom” like King Solomon teaches, asking the elders’ advice. Ellie Bowman

“Get wisdom, get understanding do not forget my words or swerve from them.”
King Solomon
Proverbs 4:5

*Wisdom Book

“It is meaningful relationships and purposeful engagement (even at end of life) that defines aging well.”

What is wisdom?

Research shows that several qualities emerge again and again in older people who score high on the wisdom scale (Ardelt):

- **Learn from** previous negative experiences,
- **Recast crises** as a problem to be solved like a puzzle,
- **Step outside themselves** and assess a troubling situation with calm reflection,
- **Take action** in situations they can control while accepting inability to do so when matters are outside their control.

Grow and develop at all ages

- Cultivating wisdom of our elders is ultimately about offering residents the opportunity to reflect with deep insight into their own lives, cultivate awareness, share their wisdom, and ultimately let go of attachments and live fully in the present moment.
- What do residents spend time doing?
- Who asks for their wisdom?
- Do you talk to them about growth?
- Tap into resident’s wisdom – *your next steps*

(Jeanne Adams, Med. Creative Forecasting 5/15)
Each person can and does make a difference

Pioneer Network core value

Learning Circles
Being asked your opinion

Courtesy Pueblo Extended Care

Artifacts of Culture Change

Learning Circles

Support: Giving residents and staff opportunity to share their opinions and ideas

Colorow Care Center, Olathe, CO
“Emergency Learning Circle”
We are also using learning circles for our other staffing meetings - we used learning circles last week for our CNA meetings, and we are using them for our in-services as well. I think those could be the key to the deep system culture change we are all striving for, because my theory is that when people speak what they feel and think, then they own it. After everyone has voiced their opinions in the circle on how to solve a problem, then I ask them to quietly to themselves make the commitment to doing that one thing they said they could do. I am seeing results already.

La Vonda Cathcart, Administrator
Holly Care Center Holly, CO

Learning Circles
- Talking stick concept.
- In a circle everyone is equal.
- Everyone has the right to speak (or pass).
- Includes residents, families and staff in making decisions and sharing opinions.
- For problem solving as well as just getting to know one another better.
- Costs no money, builds cohesion.
- No cross talk, that’s when we learn from each other.
  ❖ What is something wise an older person has taught you?
Promote the growth and development of all Pioneer Network core value

- LTC famous for write you up and fire you
- Career Ladders, Job Development
- How do we help each other grow?
- Growth Plans
  - For residents instead of Care Plans
  - For team members instead of performance evals

DON with one of her Lead CNAs

Practice self-examination searching for new creativity and opportunities for doing better Pioneer Network core value

Life Care Center Greeley, CO
Eden Alternative Principle 8

We’ve relied too heavily upon top–down bureaucratic authority...

An Elder–centered community honors its Elders by de–emphasizing top–down bureaucratic authority and seeking instead to place the maximum possible decision–making authority into the hands of the Elders or into the hands of those closest to them.

The Green House Project Sage

A Sage to the culture change movement
An original pioneer of the Pioneer Network
Carter Catlett Williams
2013 Convening Remarks
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1i0IOUukR2E
(8 min.)
The generations must find a way to share daily life.
Elders need the stimulation of young people … to offer encouragement and sometimes words of caution.
And elders need relationships with middle ages.
Children and young people need firsthand contact with elders that old age is not a strange, foreign country to them.
Let’s not be confined to one stage of life.
Educate yourselves and others about this new way of living b/c we belong together not in ghettos of old age or single age culture.

Carter Catlett Williams

Meaning and Purpose

Recommend “too many service projects to count” – that will compete with bingo

Service/volunteer ideas:
- Letters to soldiers
- Fill backpacks
- Fund raise for local causes, family w/cancer, etc.
- Cards to residents in hospital
- Visit lonely neighbors
- Food bank drives
- Committees, decision making, helping with the life of the community

“They want to be able to engage in meaningful activities that make a difference.” (Kane, 2001)
“Activities” or Engagement?

- Moving from “activities programming” to engagement with real life
- Decision making = meaningful engagement

Could meaningful engagement reduce falls, anxiety, depression, boredom and more?

Self-directed Living

Independent Living
Assisted Living
Long Term Care

Are you promoting and protecting independence?

In Assisted Living?
In Independent Living?
True Choice or Token Choice

- What are some token choices?
- Do committees really have power? Real power or token power?

CMS New Regulations
Definitions §483.5

- **Person-centered care.** For purposes of this subpart, person-centered care means to focus on the resident as the locus of control and support the resident in making their own choices and having control over their daily lives.
Resident rights §483.10

- A facility must treat each resident with respect and dignity and care for each resident in a manner and in an environment that promotes maintenance or enhancement of his or her quality of life, recognizing each resident’s individuality. The facility must protect and promote the rights of the resident.

CMS: Tag F561 Self-Determination

The resident has the right to:

- **choose** activities, schedules (including sleeping and waking) and health care consistent with interests, assessments, plan of care;
- interact with members of the community both inside and outside the facility, and
- **make choices** about aspects of his or her life in the facility that are significant to the resident.
Resident Decision Making

- Advisory Councils
  - Dining
  - Meaningful engagement
  - Holiday
  - Décor

Courtesy Sunny Hill Nursing Home of Will County, Joliet, IL

Sunny Hill’s Resident Hiring Committee

Community Meetings

Barry and Debbie Barkan
- Builds community
- Creates connection
- Explores meaning
- Gathering as a community to discuss things of mutual interest and concern, to celebrate, to remember and to mourn.
- **Hypothesis** that residents could learn and grow when they become involved in meaningful experiences.

Community Meeting
Courtesy The Rehabilitation Center At Sandalwood, Lakewood, CO
Celebrate Residents

- Communally acknowledge and celebrate residents at every opportunity
  - gains/progress,
  - life passages,
  - losses,
  - recovery from illness,
  - return from absences,
  - the way they look today,
  - the role they take on in the community,
  - birthdays,
  - just showing up, etc.

Clear Creek Care Center’s Community Meeting

- Birthdays/Landmark Life events
- Announcements/Upcoming events
- Planning events/holidays/decorations
- Honor residents attending first time
- Jokes
- New residents and staff introduced – give the
- Visitors introduced
- Residents moving, Residents dying
- Policy review
- Open forum for questions, comments, announcements
- Resident closed with a devotion
Daily Decision Making = true QAPI, better than monthly Resident Council

- Parkview Care Center, Denver, CO
- Budget
- Products
- “We run this place.”
- Now in place of Resident Council
- Deal with issue in real time as a community

Resident Council Better Practices

- Neighborhood Councils instead of monthly Resident Council or in addition, or Resident Representative Council Meeting
- Hold meetings in a circle
- Call it something else: What Really Needs Talked About – see what happens
- Administrators are in the best position to lead Resident Council: only they can make decisions on the spot and fix problems “now” – no middle manager can do that
- Daily community meeting deals w/ issues in real time – much better than monthly, too far out
F565

- Right to organize and participate in resident groups.
- The facility must consider the views of a resident or family group and act promptly upon the grievances and recommendations of such groups concerning issues of resident care and life in the facility.
- The facility must be able to demonstrate their response and rationale for such response.
- This should not be construed to mean that the facility must implement as recommended every request of the resident or family group.

Dealing with grievances better/being proactive /doing Resident Council differently

Your ideas
Giving residents more decision making power
Our steps in moving forward

- No more “difficult family member” - care partner
- We become ongoing educators. “Give families knowledge, ‘you wouldn’t have alarms at home,’ explain the logic.” Morrine Howley, speechtherapist
- Guilt
- Give ideas for time together, gifts, jobs
- Embrace, honor, have an expectancy to help you know the person well
- Also teach that it is the resident you serve
- Reframe the question: “What would your mom want, say, etc.” (Not what the family member wants, what resident wants.)
- Family Council: decision making, education, turn into a support group, food

Proactively Serving Families
“I just wasted 3 years of my and my wife’s life asking if she remembered...”

How did we come to view memory as the center of our identity? One’s self persists until the end

Social memory remains, even when individual memory falters

Relationships with a person with dementia are reciprocal

NOT visiting, but instead “reknitting” the person into the fabric of our lives

Family is part of a person’s community, not “visitors.”

Let’s be about “meaning making.”

Families as care partners

What can you do to honor families as care partners?

Family is very engaged in daily life. Playing pool, calling bingo, and joining in for meals are some of the ways family members are not just visitors, but part of the home. GA Eden Alternative Registered Home
“The rights of mankind are not to be rummaged for among old parchments or musty records. They are written as with sunbeam in the whole volume of human nature, by the hand of Divinity itself, and can never be erased or obscured by mortal power.”

Alexander Hamilton

Rights: God given, federally mandated, often state mandated

Contact Info

If I can be helpful please feel free to contact me
Carmen Bowman
carmen@edu-catering.com
www.edu-catering.com
303-981-7228

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