

## Resident Reactions

This month, we will explore resident reactions.



Some of what may be referred to as resident “behaviors” are actually your residents way of trying to

communicate an unmet need. All behavior is communication. Understanding this is one of the best ways to *prevent abuse, neglect, and exploitation.*

## Why is This Important?!

**Getting to know your residents and creating good relationships with them benefits everyone!**

- ✓ It helps you to provide the best care
- ✓ You can better understand what your residents want and/or need
- ✓ It reduces resident-to-resident aggression
- ✓ It decreases negative interactions
- ✓ It helps residents feel safer and more calm
- ✓ Residents are more likely to react to their stressors in healthy ways
- ✓ It creates more desirable living conditions for everyone

## What Might My Resident be Trying to Tell Me?

Let’s explore why residents may react or communicate in certain ways. Ask yourself some of the following questions:

### Physical / Medical

- ◆ Is he or she in pain?
- ◆ Could there be an infection?
- ◆ Might this resident be hungry/cold/tired?
- ◆ Is this person lacking any assistive devices that could help this person communicate?
- ◆ Does he or she understand my questions or requests?

### Social / Emotional

- ◆ Is this person picking up on *my* stress or bad mood?
- ◆ Does the resident feel threatened?
- ◆ Could he or she have been mistreated by someone else?
- ◆ Is this person lonely, scared, frustrated, sad?
- ◆ Might the resident be having a bad day?

### Cultural

- ◆ Is this a normal reaction as a result of the residents’ cultural beliefs?
- ◆ Does he or she have a religious preference that is not being valued?
- ◆ Is this a family tradition or custom?

### Environmental

- ◆ Is it too loud, bright, hot or cold for the resident?
- ◆ Is this person in an area he or she does not like?
- ◆ Is the area chaotic or cluttered?
- ◆ Does the resident dislike his or her roommate?
- ◆ Does this response happen at the same time every day?

## Tips for Effective Communication

Here are some great tools for communicating effectively and understanding your residents' needs:

- Get to know your residents
- Learn their moods and needs
- Ask them to share their religious and cultural beliefs and how they want to practice them
- Be fully present for your residents when communicating with them
- Avoid labeling negative communication as “behaviors”
- Learn what unmet needs your residents are trying to communicate
- Use active listening skills (lean forward, nodding, use appropriate eye contact, etc.)
- Watch for nonverbal cues and body language
- Slow down and speak up, as needed

When caregivers are compassionate and caring and get to know their residents, they are more likely to notice a change in a residents' communication. Using a person-centered approach to care in your everyday interactions greatly increases the chance of identifying abuse, neglect, or exploitation that may have occurred.

## Caring for Residents Makes a Difference!

*“The most important thing we do is provide residents in our care with hope. Some have no family. We are the first person they see in the morning and the last person before they go to bed. That is invaluable. They know someone is there, someone cares, and tomorrow will be better than today.”* (Kim White, CNA, Florida)



## To Report Abuse, Neglect, or Exploitation

Of a nursing home resident by a staff member:  
Call LARA: (800) 882-6006

Of an older adult living at home, in assisted living, adult foster care, home for the aged, or a nursing home, by anyone who is *not* a staff member:

Call Adult Protective Services: (855) 444-3911

If you think a crime has occurred: Call your local police/sheriff department (and LARA)—If the danger is immediate, call 911

### Happy Thanksgiving



to you  
and yours!  
Stay safe  
and warm.

## For More Information

Long Term Care Ombudsman: (517) 394-3027  
Tri-County Office on Aging: (800) 405-9141

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