

**2006**

***RESIDENT COUNCIL***

***BEST PRACTICES***



***LONG TERM CARE OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM***

***&***

***VOLUNTEER RESIDENT ADVOCATE PROGRAM***

***IN PARTNERSHIP WITH***

***THE STATEWIDE COALITION OF  
RESIDENT COUNCILS***

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## BEST PRACTICES

Many Resident Councils have noted best practices related to food and dietary issues at their homes. As one facility stated “food is very important to us and we like to talk about it!” Following are some of the specific **best practices** of Resident Councils regarding food:

A Food Committee was formed and meets once a month with the Dietary Director to specifically discuss food-related issues. One Resident food committee member represents each unit at the nursing home and committee members bring up issues they find on their unit.

Ten residents at another nursing home gather for a cooking class. Initially, five recipes are selected. Each week one recipe is made during the class. It might be blueberry muffins, lemon squares, oatmeal cookies, cheesecake or soup. Muffins and cookies are baked in the kitchen to be shared with the group for an afternoon coffee time.

A Resident Council recently installed a food committee, which meets fifteen minutes before the regular Resident Council meeting. The group discusses with the Food Services Director any problems that exist between food service and the residents. Besides identifying and solving any food service problems this committee has brought more residents to the table. Residents who might not normally come to a Resident Council meeting are now staying because at the end of the Food Committee the Resident Council meeting begins. Having more residents involved brings fresh insight to their over all community living.

To achieve success a Resident Council encouraged suggestions from the Residents. The first suggestion was to improve food in various ways and to make certain dietary changes to the menu.

A Resident Council directly addressed concerns to the Food Services Director and Dietician regarding restricted diets.

A Resident Council holds a separate monthly Food Committee meeting with the dietary manager. This facilitates communications and prompt correction of problems and issues.

A nursing home has music piped into the dining room and this makes the Residents dining experience more enjoyable.

An Assisted Living Facility reports that the chef attends the tenants' meeting. He actively listens to Resident concerns and grievances and makes notes on preferences and dislikes.

At another facility the chef attends the Resident Council meeting every two months to review with Residents which entrees were well received and those that Residents disliked. In addition, after complaints about cold food, Residents were consulted and entrees are now always warm.

A Resident Council offers any meal of your choice on your Birthday.

Resident Councils report that they have developed creative ways in which they facilitate the specific needs of their Council. These **best practices** include:

A facility has a Resident Council Representative on each floor of the home. The Representative speaks with individual Residents prior to the Resident Council meeting and then brings this information to the Resident Council meeting. In addition, the meeting is announced in the morning and then again in the afternoon.

A Resident Council President reports that a meeting is held on each floor once a month and the information from those individual meetings is brought to the Resident Council meeting. Issues are well documented and successfully resolved in this manner.

At another nursing home all concerns expressed during the Resident Council meetings are written up, then copies of the Resident Council minutes are given to all department heads, with the concerns highlighted.

A facility suggests that staff could be asked to excuse themselves for a part of the meeting so Residents would feel more comfortable speaking out about any concerns or grievances they may have.

A Resident Council holds meetings every other month which are one hour in duration. There is a suggestion box available to residents where they can make anonymous suggestions and complaints

At one nursing home the Residents, along with all the department heads hold the Resident Council meeting each month at the same time and place. If the scheduled meeting day falls on a holiday the meeting usually takes place one week later.

At this same nursing home , after each meeting, the minutes for that meeting are posted on every unit. Residents may also request to have their own copy. Large print copies of the minutes are provided for everyone attending and are also read aloud. At the end of the meetings, there is frequently a guest speaker or brief educational program on topics of importance to Residents of a nursing home. This Resident Council President believes success is based on communication between everyone. For example, with all department heads together, issues, concerns, and comments can be addressed directly to the source or sources, since some issues involve more than one department. Immediate response is then possible. If a matter has to be looked into, the response is brought back to the following meeting. These Residents take pride in their caretakers for addressing and resolving their concerns. They believe "their issues are like anyone else, cold coffee, not enough bibs, and smoking." They work together and strive for a successful end result. At these meetings the department heads also discuss any upcoming changes that may affect the Residents.

At one nursing home the staff reminds the Resident Council and its sub-committees not to wait when individual and personal issues arise but to come forward and let them know immediately if something needs correction.

A Resident Council has found that when they bring issues such as unclean shower rooms or excessive noisiness during the 11 pm to 7 am shift to the attention of the staff the problems have been resolved.

A Resident Council President personally visits individual Residents to reinforce the importance of Resident Council and to collect Resident concerns and grievances.

A Resident Council notes that they have only two (trusted) staff at their Council meetings. The Council sends their issues in writing to department heads and gives them thirty days to respond.

A Resident Council President reports that they hold a closed-door, resident-only meeting. As a result, the residents are more open in voicing their concerns without fear of reprisal.

A Resident Council assigns a designee to each floor, this representative visits privately with individual residents. The designee then presents the issues anonymously at the Resident Council meeting

Some Resident Councils have developed **best practices** related to addressing the relationships of Residents and staff:

At the monthly Resident Council meetings of one facility, a staff member is voted on and receives a certificate and posted “kudos” for that month. This is a special honor coming directly from the Residents.

At a nursing home one staff member is honored as a monthly “Resident Council Employee Award” winner. A staff member is nominated at each Resident Council meeting, voted on and receives a certificate and posted kudos for that month. This is a special honor coming directly from the Residents.

One President of a Resident Council writes a letter to all staff thanking them and expressing gratitude for the care that is shown daily to each Resident.

Another Resident Council chooses a staff member each month to receive a Certificate of Recognition for their hard work. The Resident Council presents these awards to staff on a quarterly basis and at the Resident Council meeting.

A Resident Council implemented a “wall-plaque system” for CNA-of-the-day. This identifies the caregiver to the Resident on a daily basis. This was a serious Resident concern that was resolved.

Numerous Resident Councils report on the programs they have initiated for their Residents as well as outreach services they have provided to their communities. These **best practices** are:

A Resident Council invited the Staff Development Nurse to speak on health issues concerning residents. The “Resident Council In-services” are held 1 – 2 times a month. Topics that are discussed are “Dehydration – Importance of Fluid

Intake”, “Arthritis – The Many Types and Treatment”, and “Incontinence – What you always wanted to know”. The Residents enjoy this very much.

A Resident Council developed a Welcoming Center for all new Residents who enter the facility. The idea was needed to make new Residents feel welcome and at home in their new environment.

A Resident Council insisted that their officers be given volunteer badges to wear daily so as to help other residents to be able to identify them should they have an issue or concern they wish to have addressed.

Another facility has had great success with a Welcoming Committee and the President has personally welcomed more than 50 new Residents!

As a result of fundraising and donations to a nursing home, the Resident Council was able to purchase an 18' x 10' awning. This awning provides needed shade to the patio area used by residents, visitors and for special events.

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A Resident Council responded to a suggestion to offer group therapy- a group was formed and now meets every Friday!

A Resident Council created a newsletter called the “Resident Voice”.

A Resident Council saw a problem that they “just had to figure out.” They decided to bake pumpkin cakes and they delivered approximately 100 people at homeless shelters.

A resident council reports that it is “strong and hard working”. The members sponsor craft fairs, bake sales, and food drive raffles, and as part of a generous resident council, they make donations to community charities, purchase Christmas gifts for residents, and provide flower arrangements and special events for both residents and staff, when appropriate.

A Resident Council holds a daily bagel & muffin sale which helps to feed their animals and birds.

