



Tip #4

Consistent Staffing

Think of yourself in a new and unfamiliar situation, surrounded by unfamiliar faces. Imagine this happens almost every day. It feels like starting out in a new high school over and over again. Who are all these other people? How will I remember their names? There are so many strangers--what do they really know about me? Now, imagine you also have dementia.

With Consistent Assignments in person-centered care, staff and management place value on a stable team of individuals committed to “knowing the resident” and building care on a foundation of relationships. Staff, as well as residents and families benefit, as they get to know and depend on one another to work fluidly and flexibly support the unique strengths of each elder. The opportunities consistent staffing offers include:

- It makes it easier for residents and families to “share the care” with only a few staff members.
- Creates strong bonds and builds trust. It becomes easier for staff to collect and build upon the resident’s Life Story.
- Staff members are more in tune to slight changes in health, behavior or relationships that may affect well-being such as a medication interaction or UTI.
- Consistent staff is better able to share care tips and approaches that work well with the older adults.
- Families are more open to discussing sensitive issues, share useful concerns or make suggestions to staff they see regularly and get to know over time.
- Familiar staff fosters empathy between staff and residents who know each other well.
- More humor, relaxed atmosphere of care and staff and resident activity engagement are often visible hallmarks in communities that foster consistent staffing.
- Lower turnover, lower error rates and increased work satisfaction are linked by some data on consistent assignment.

Action items:

- Hold staff Learning Circles and discuss the Pros and Cons of consistent staffing from their perspective.
- Try a consistent staffing approach in one section of your community and evaluate it after 120 days. Perhaps partner with a local university or school of Nursing to do this. What needs to be improved, changed or eliminated?
- Examine what type of training may need to be revised to foster the advantages of consistent staffing.
- Conduct a learning circle with family members and invite staff. Ask for any testimonials regarding their perceived benefits to consistent staffing.
- Engage residents in making a poster, picture board or bulletin board with pictures, job titles and length of service of the consistent staff that work with them.
- Explore the Person-Centered Care GOAL of the Advancing Excellence Campaign and the [Long-Term Care Improvement Guide](#) published by The Picker Institute and Planetree.

For more information and training:

- To find out more about the Advancing Excellence Person Centered Care Goal go to: <https://www.nhqualitycampaign.org/goalDetail.aspx?q=PCC#>
- For information on how to conduct a Learning Circle go to: <http://actionpact.com/assets/cache/learning-circle.pdf>
- For more information and education on Person-Centered Care in Missouri go to the MC5 website at: <http://www.momc5.com/>
- For more information about Person Centered Care and training across the country go to the Pioneer Network website at: <http://www.pioneernetwork.net/>