



Tip #4: Consistent Staffing

Think of yourself in a new and unfamiliar situation, surrounded by unknown faces. Imagine this happens almost every day. It feels like starting at a new school over and over again. Who are all these 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, residents and families benefit, as they get to know and depend on one another to work fluidly and flexibly to support the unique strengths of each resident. Benefits of stable staffing include:

- Makes it easier for residents and families to “share the care” with only a few staff members
- Creates strong bonds and builds trust, making it easier for staff to collect and build upon the resident’s Life Story
- Helps staff members be more in tune to even slight changes in health, behavior or relationships that may affect a resident’s well-being (e.g., medication interaction, possible UTI)
- Makes it easier for staff to share care tips and helpful approaches with other caregivers
- Helps families be more open to discussing sensitive issues and share useful concerns or suggestions with staff they regularly see and get to know
- Fosters empathy between staff and the resident
- Allows for more humor and a relaxed atmosphere, and resident engagement is often a visible hallmark
- Makes for lower turnover and error rates and for increased work satisfaction

Action Items

- Hold staff Learning Circles and discuss the pros and cons of consistent staffing from staff members’ prospective.
- 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 of 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 National Nursing Home Quality Improvement Campaign and the [Long-Term Care Improvement Guide](#) published by The Picker Institute and Planetree.

For more information and training...

- About the National Nursing Home Quality Improvement Campaign Person-Centered Care Goal, go to <https://www.nhqualitycampaign.org/goalDetail.aspx?q=PCC#>.
- About how to conduct a Learning Circle, go to <http://actionpact.com/assets/cache/learning-circle.pdf>.
- About person-centered care in Missouri, go to the MC5 website at <http://www.momc5.com/>.
- About person-centered care across the country, go to the Pioneer Network’s website at <http://www.pioneernetwork.net/>.



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This material was developed by National Nursing Home Quality Improvement Campaign and is brought to you by Mountain-Pacific Quality Health, the Medicare Quality Innovation Network-Quality Improvement Organization (QIN-QIO) for Montana, Wyoming, Alaska, Hawaii and the U.S. Pacific Territories of Guam, American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, under contract with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Contents presented do not necessarily reflect CMS policy. 11SOW-MPQHF-AS-C2-17-168