

Action Pact, Inc.

www.Culturechangenow.com

Ask Pact

Topic: Welcome to Our Neighborhood!



Dear Ask Pact,

As the Business Manager, I am hoping that you can shed some light on the role of the "non-caregiver" in the culture change move. We who work in the office areas are not sure what our role should be in the grand scheme of things, and it's never been clearly defined to us. Are there articles available or websites where we can get some information on this aspect of culture change? I'd appreciate any help you can give us.

- Sue Sawyer, Director of Administrative Services, Brethren Retirement Community

Dear Sue,

Great question! And one that could come up in every department in a facility - business office, housekeeping, laundry, maintenance and dietary - where people have not traditionally provided direct care to residents.

It's all about relationships. No matter what your primary role in the facility, work to establish relationships with residents and

the staff in a household or neighborhood. This could be friend, neighbor, advocate, sponsor, pen pal, extended family, adopted grandparent.. as long as it is a consistent, caring dependable relationship. If you're in a neighborhood model, have each person in the facility be assigned to a neighborhood.

First let me describe what I mean by neighborhood. One vital component is to have decentralized dining or at least a clustering of dining experiences (continental breakfast, or snack bar) to whatever extent possible by your physical limitations in your hallway, wing or unit. It is also important to have staff who are permanently assigned to the neighborhood and do not rotate, except in emergencies. There should be an integrated team approach to care. And finally, the neighborhood should regularly involve residents and staff together in directing their neighborhood functions and activities.

So what do these folks from other departments do in the neighborhood? What is expected of them after they're assigned? I think that's different position by

"Ask Pact" is our own question-and-answer column where people can ask their Culture Change questions and have them answered by our seasoned team of trainers and educators. You may find some topics here that are relevant to you - if not, feel free to Ask Pact!

www.culturechange now.com/askpact.html

Action Pact, Inc.

www.Culturechangenow.com

Ask Pact

Neighborhood, *continued*

A resident could share the story behind Aunt Emily's vase or a favorite scent that reminds her of clean..



position - and perhaps facility by facility. But again, I can give you some suggestions by position.

Housekeepers: Each is assigned to a neighborhood and works only there with the exception that each might have some common area that they are also responsible for. A housekeeper can clean with the residents, reminiscing about the many hours they cleaned, the products they used, their special preferences for how to care for their special possessions. A resident could share the story behind Aunt Emily's vase or a favorite scent that reminds her of clean. The housekeeper then could clean the vase just the right way. (The housekeeper could ask family to bring in the favorite product, but remember, cleaning products need to be locked up.) In honoring their possessions and their preferences, you are honoring the person. As part of the staff team, housekeepers attend neighborhood team meetings.

Dietary: Dietary staff can become familiar with the residents' favorite foods and bring them a bigger portion or just the knowledge that supper tonight is their favorite and something to look forward to. There is opportunity to grow a special

relationship just by bringing warm cookies out of the oven or knowing whether the resident likes white or dark meat without having to ask. Imagine the pride of the resident who teaches a dietary staff person how to make her famous homemade fudge, assists in the preparation and then shares the treat with members of her household or a neighbor. Dietary staff can grow in their relationship with the resident in their households by training to participate in the RAI process, particularly the care planning process, attending and sharing their relationships with the residents first hand. Dietary staff members should be assigned to a neighborhood. They deliver food to that neighborhood and help in the dining room if possible. They also do clean-up in that dining room. They attend neighborhood team meetings as the representative from dietary and serve the dietary department as a representative of that neighborhood.

Maintenance and Laundry: If there are enough laundry personnel, have each belong to a neighborhood. They can deliver to and collect from that neighborhood. They can get to know the residents there - solve their lost socks problems and learn how they like their clothes

Action Pact, Inc.

www.Culturechangenow.com

Ask Pact

Neighborhood, *continued*



Provide them with a little interpersonal training. Help them see that residents are people too!

to be folded. If there is not enough staff in this area, consider having each neighborhood have a maintenance or laundry person assigned to them.

Business Office: Have each person belong to a neighborhood as an extended family member. They should try to make some of the meetings, especially when they're planning activities and special events. Encourage them to hang their coat in their neighborhood or household if it is reasonable. That way they stop and chat when they come in and say goodbye as they leave. The neighborhood might want to develop a buddy system so that non-caregivers assigned to the neighborhood can have a special relationship with someone. Definitely include them in all holidays and special events. It's important not to overwhelm them with expectations ("You have to answer call lights in our hall," for example), but let it be relationship based. We grow our expectations of ourselves as we begin to grow in our respect and love for each other. If business office folks are resistive, talk it through with them. What worries them? What intrigues them? Often they're afraid of the unknown. They think they won't measure up. They can't imagine building a

relationship with someone who needs so much. Provide them with a little interpersonal training. Help them see that residents are people too. If a staff member is very frightened about building a relationship with someone who is seriously frail, assign that staff person to befriend someone who is able to give a little back. Let the business staff person ease into this new role, to grow in self-confidence.

Here is one HR staff member's story of the joy she found in her friendship with a resident (contributed by Vonda Hollingsworth of Pennybyrn at Maryfield in High Point, NC):

Today I had fried chicken and macaroni and cheese for lunch. It made me miss my friend Foby. She almost made it to her 99th birthday, missing it by only five days. You might think someone that old would be "slipping" a bit. Well, you might get into trouble thinking that way around Foby! She could recite all the books of the Bible at a speed that made me dizzy. Everyday she did the puzzle in the newspaper. Occasionally, she would get stumped, in which case I was usually of no help. If she couldn't figure it out neither could I. Sometimes I had to communicate by writing, since her hearing had



For inspiration, information, products and services visit:
www.culturechangenow.com
Call or email Chris Chance:
cchance@actionpact.com
414-258-3649



Action Pact, Inc. Ask Pact

www.Culturechangenow.com

www.culturechangenow.com/askpact.htm

Neighborhood, continued

17 things you can do

to be involved in the lives of elders at your facility:

1. Share your special talent
2. Share your coffee break
3. Share your family, bring them in to visit
4. Help put up holiday decorations
5. Take a resident outside with you for a break on a nice day
6. Bring in flowers or produce from your garden
7. Read a book or magazine together
8. Share stories
9. Share photos
10. Listen
11. Share and make a favorite recipe
12. Share "the one that got away" tales
13. Have a secret "hello" sign you can show while passing
14. Let them share their special talent with you
15. Help write letters or emails
16. Play cards
17. Laugh together



mostly gone. However, she had taught elementary school in her past life and would chastise you for your poor handwriting or spelling without fail. Hers, of course, was elegant and flawless. If you were a republican, you had better learn to keep it to yourself - or else run fast. Everyday, she saved her boiled egg from breakfast to fuss at the kitchen staff for not knowing what SOFT BOILED meant. Food was her favorite subject to fuss about, since obviously no one could cook in our kitchen. That is, except for Sundays when we had fried chicken and macaroni and cheese. For some reason, that day they would get it right. I would take her through the buffet where she would demand a big breast with no back meat and the corner from the macaroni pan (the cheese settled there) and we would enjoy lunch together.

When I held her hand in the hospital bed that last day, I thought how lucky I was to have known her. Five years ago, I would have never thought that I would so dearly love this woman who her stuck out her tongue when you walked by and would never let anyone sit with her. Oh, what I would have lost out on. And maybe, just maybe, I gave a little back to her. We just might have missed that opportunity to

love each other if it hadn't been for the strong pull of "Culture Change" in our home. See, I am not a direct caregiver, or even a housekeeper who gets to work and spend their days with the residents. I am just a Human Resource Director who has no reason to build relationships with residents. No reason, except that it makes a difference in their life and in mine.

Oh, and Foby, I had the corner of the macaroni in your honor today.

Any staff member could get to know the resident's favorite powder or cologne or room freshener and be a secret pal providing it. You could also be a special link with resident family members, facilitating a special phone call to a family member each week just to report on the week. These could be business office things; just think how nice it might be to get an update on Grandma in with the bill. Make sure to consider confidentiality issues and get an OK from the resident.

Here's a [list of 17 ways](#) to engage elders. Use it to inspire and maybe even post it as a reminder.

Sincerely,

Action Pact

