

Nursing Home Success Stories

Topic:
Physical Restraints



Reducing Physical Restraints: Advice from Oakview Terrace in Freeman, South Dakota

Oakview Terrace, a nursing home located in Freeman, South Dakota has been 100 percent restraint free since May 25, 2006. The staff saw a need to reduce restraints, as they noticed residents becoming more combative and agitated from the use of restraints. What follows is Oakview Terrace's approach and advice on how to become a restraint free facility.

Small Steps

Change was the hardest obstacle to overcome. Staff resisted the change because they had the mindset that restraints were keeping residents safe. Fear existed, even with family members and physicians, in letting go of restraints.

At one point, Oakview Terrace turned to using motion alarms, as an alternative to restraints. This change, however, created even more agitation, including those residents who were in the same room as a resident with an alarm. The staff found it to be a poor alternative for most residents.

Staffers from Oakview Terrace attended a meeting hosted by the state Medicare Quality Improvement Organization, the South Dakota Foundation for Medical Care, where some attendees were asked to sit on pressure sensitive motion alarms during a portion of the meeting. Later, the participants had to share how they felt. The exercise turned out to be a very raw experience. Attendees shared that they had no idea how much the psychology of the alarms affected people. Making a resident sit on an alarm pad, for instance, could cause other problems like anxiety and even pressure ulcers. Oakview Terrace management took that same activity back to their teams and it turned out to be a true eye-opener.

"There were things we did that were wrong, but we didn't think so at the time," shared Heather Thompson, Director of Nursing at Oakview Terrace. "We had a wide variety of alarms we used to keep residents safe. Now we know, for the most part, that is not true. However, it was a step down in our eyes from restraints."

Sustaining Change

So, how did they eventually do it? Oakview Terrace staffers threw out every device ever used as a restraint within the facility. This is a very bold move, but according to staff, it is the necessary step that any facility wanting to become restraint free must do.

Oakview Terrace staff were forced to look at the issue and find other ways to keep residents safe. For instance, if a resident was previously being restrained in his or her bed at night because the resident was at risk for a fall, the resident was moved to a lower bed. The staff found other ways to help residents that previously were thought to need restraints to address their safety concerns.

"You can become restraint free, but it is a process you have to constantly revisit," stated Jolene Thomas, a member of the culture change committee. "Residents change, their heal status changes. What you find worked at one time, might not work any more. You must constantly fine-tune processes as your resident population changes."

Some residents' family members shared concerns about Oakview Terrace not using restraints. The staff became advocates for the residents, educating and communicating with families about why restraints were not the solution.

Oakview Terrace depends on a safety committee that meets once a week. This team is charged with assessing resident safety and implementing ideas and processes to keep residents free of harm.

Advice to Others

Throw out your restraints! If you keep a few devices around for "just in case", eventually they may become standard use again. In addition to throwing restraints out entirely, staff at Oakview Terrace recommends education and perseverance. Through education and aggressive measures, staff gained acceptance of the process. "We had to be aggressive," said Thompson. "It is now engrained in our staff that restraints are

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absolutely not an option.”

Oakview Terrace focused on educating staff that restraints can cause depression, pressure ulcers and the loss of mobility and dignity. Every staff member is educated on the risks to allow everyone to play a part in resident safety. Ultimately, one must keep in mind that this is for the resident’s safety, dignity and a higher quality of life.

Consistent assignment was also a key to success. By having the same staff work with the same residents, they got to know them better and know when to watch them more closely.

Results

In Q4 2003, Oakview Terrace’s physical restraint use was at 21.6 percent. Now they are completely restraint free. Staff have something to celebrate as well as confidence to keep moving forward.

The rate of resident falls has also dropped. In 2006 the facility suffered 136 falls. In 2007, they only endured 100 falls. This has stemmed from consistent assignment and educating staff on what residents are at risk and how to prevent falls.

Aggressive measures proved to be a successful tactic for Oakview Terrace, however, these measures not only improved resident’s quality of life and safety, it has also improved staff and resident morale.

Resources:



Advancing Excellence in
America’s Nursing Homes
Campaign
<http://nhqualitycampaign.org/>

Check out the web site for clinical materials and resources to assist you with your Campaign goals. And, you can register to participate in the campaign online, too.

MedQIC (www.medqic.org) is a website where healthcare professionals can find and share quality improvement resources. MedQIC is funded by CMS to promote transformational change by sharing best practices and improvement strategies for health care delivery.

This is what one nursing home administrator says about MedQIC: “I think it’s valuable. It’s probably one of the most valuable sites I’ve found. I do a lot of surfing. I look for a lot of information out there. My Director of Nursing is always asking me to go dig for stuff. And

if I can find it somewhere this easy first, that’s where I’m going to go.”



Quality

Partners of Rhode Island [Nursing Home Quality Improvement Organization Support Contractor (QIOSC)] and Qualis Health (Communications QIOSC) have joined in a collaborative effort to collect and write nursing home success stories to support the QIO Program’s NHQI priority topics, as well as the eight measurable goals of the Advancing Excellence in America’s Nursing Homes Campaign.

Thank you to those nursing homes that have shared stories publicly.