

Activity Suggestion: Communicating Residents' Rights through Music

Recommended Participants: Residents, staff and/or family members.

Activity Type: Small group using music and discussion

Description: This activity illustrates the rights to access and visitation, free choice, privacy and confidentiality of personal and clinical records, a dignified existence, and self-determination. The desired outcome for this activity is for staff, family and residents to learn about the meaning of resident rights in daily life while participating in a fun activity.

Before the activity begins the group leader collects the songs listed on the handouts. These selections are found on tape or in various music books. A visit to the local library or music store should be helpful in locating the recommended songs. Also refer to the enclosed resource list. Another option is for the leader to ask someone to play the accompaniments on the piano. The songs are examples of music which is familiar to many older adults. Song sheets with the words are provided. The participants sing the words to each song and discuss the related resident right. Discussion of how this right is honored in the community and in the facility is encouraged. The group leader may want to read additional resident rights and ask participants to suggest songs which exemplify each right.

Adaptations: To adapt this group activity for individuals, videotape the group program (with the participants' permission) and show and discuss the video in individual resident rooms. For groups and/or individuals, use large print words on individual song sheets or write words on a flip chart. For groups only, show the words using an overhead projector.

For groups, encourage participants to sit in a circle. The group leader should sit next to participants with hearing impairments and/or stand next to them and repeat the discussion. The participation of residents who have early, or middle stage dementia is improved by using simple explanations and repetition. Residents with severe dementia usually enjoy the music. Family members of these residents benefit from being reminded of their role in assuring resident rights are honored. If family and staff members participate along with residents, assure resident participation by asking questions directly to individual residents and waiting for a response before addressing questions to the others.

1. Let Me Call You Sweetheart

The Right to Access and Visitation. Use the song to emphasize the right to be visited by anyone who has the consent of the resident.

2. Never on Sunday

The Right to Free Choice, specifically the right to participate in planning care and treatment or changes in care and treatment.

Note: Ask the residents to change the wording of the song to fit their personal choices, e. g., "I will take my shower in the morning but never in the night because that's my time of rest."

3. Make the World Go Away

The Right to Privacy and Confidentiality of personal and clinical records. Discussion includes the right to privacy in medical treatment, telephone communications, personal care, visits and meetings of family and resident groups.

4. If I Could Hear My Mother Pray Again

Resident Rights, specifically the right to a dignified existence. Discussion focuses on how to communicate consideration and respect for each person's individuality. The song is an example of the importance of understanding an individual resident's feelings related to sadness over the loss of a loved one. The conversation also includes each resident's right to participate in worship services or to not participate. Spiritual expression is a matter of personal choice.

5. When I Grow too Old to Dream

Resident Rights, specifically the right to self-determination. Discussion illustrates how each resident has the right to define personal dreams. Regardless of age, each resident has the right to be treated with dignity and respect.