



## Opening the Door by Celebrating Relationships

**Recommended Participants:** Staff members, family members, residents and long-term care ombudsmen

**Activity Type:** Small Group Discussion

**Explanation:** Research shows supportive relationships are critical to well-being. Respecting the strengths, preferences and needs of individuals form the foundation for a nurturing community. This activity engages staff, family and residents in a conversation that identifies each person as unique. Healthy relationships also require opportunities to give to others and to receive from others. The following exercise shows the reciprocal nature of relationships in the long-term care community.

This activity demonstrates the right to a dignified existence, self-determination, and communication with and access to persons and services inside and outside the facility {483.10}. The desired outcome for this activity is for the staff, family and residents to celebrate the value of their relationships with each other.

**Adaptations:** If the group leader believes some participants will be unable and/or uncomfortable with reading the materials, read all the information out loud; rather than asking the participants to write the answers, ask them to think about their answers and then respond verbally. A flip chart or overhead projector should be used to record spoken answers.

This activity does not require that staff, family members and residents be present; however, it is most effective when all three groups participate together. The group facilitator should be experienced and have a good rapport with staff, residents and family members. Including residents with mild to moderate dementia is assessed on a case-by-case basis because the activity requires thinking abilities, which may frustrate a person with dementia. Family members of residents with dementia are still encouraged to attend and express their feelings about their relationships with the care receiver. Safety of expression and confidentiality should be assured for all attendees.

### **What I Bring to my Relationships with Others**

*Ask all participants to answer the following items.*

1. Supportive Relationships have the following qualities:
2. Circle the above qualities which best describe what you bring to relationships

### **The Benefits I Receive from my Relationship With the Residents**

*For staff & family members, choose one person you provide care for & answer the following:*

1. Resident's Strengths:
2. Resident's Preferences and/or Special Characteristics:
3. I have learned the following from this Resident:
4. A favorite memory of the person I care for is:
5. How has your relationship with this Resident opened doors for you?

## **The Benefits I Receive from my Relationship With the Caregivers**

*For residents, choose one special person (either family or staff) who provides care for you & answer the following:*

1. Caregiver's strengths:
2. Caregiver's preferences and/or special characteristics:
3. I have learned the following from this caregiver:
4. A favorite memory of the person who cares for me is:
5. How has your relationship with this caregiver opened doors for you?

## **Celebrating Relationships**

*Ask all participants to discuss the following.*

1. Identify ways to celebrate relationships (these can be group rituals such as holiday picnics or daily one-to-one rituals such as saying thank you):
2. Identify ways to include these ideas in the life of the long-term care community: