

What to do about Charlotte

Respecting the Needs of Nursing Home Residents Regarding Intimate Relationships

DVD Training Guide

This 20 minute video contains three vignettes which address different perspectives of a resident, Charlotte, and her intimate relationships in the Happy Valley Nursing Home. The first vignette reveals Charlotte's dementia and her demeanor. The second vignette discloses the thoughts and views of Jeannette, the RN who is the Director of Nursing. The third and final vignette brings to light the perspective of Charlotte's daughter, Ellen, and how family often have a difficult time with the changes that occur with their loved ones during the aging process.

Show the video in segments. After each vignette, pause the video and explore the contents by asking the corresponding questions for that particular section. The questions will create discussion among participants. There are not correct answers to the questions; the questions are to be used as conversation starters.

This training could be used in a variety of arenas. Remember that the topic of intimacy is often a touchy one and may bring about some emotions as discussion moves along.

VIGNETTE ONE

Charlotte Tabor
Resident

(Notes for Presenter: Charlotte is in her own world with her troll doll. She is jerked to a different reality when a worker talks to her from off camera. Track her thoughts as she goes from one phase of her life to another. Keep in mind that more information about Charlotte's need for intimacy will be addressed in later vignettes.)

1. What change happened when Charlotte was asked about her friend?
2. What is Charlotte's daughter worried about and why?
3. What words solicit a reaction from Charlotte and bring forth a memory?

VIGNETTE TWO

Jeannette Barnes
RN, DON

(Notes for Presenter: Jeannette explains her new role as “sex therapist” in the nursing home as she expresses the need for intimacy as a basic right and the reasons someone with confusion and impaired judgment may make the intimate choices they do.)

1. How can we keep our personal opinions from interfering in a person’s basic right to intimacy?
2. What causes individuals to be uncomfortable with intimacy amongst the elderly population?
3. Charlotte acted out her interests from her younger years while living at home by making beds and setting the table. How did she act out her need for intimacy?
4. If you were the DON having the meeting, what three main points would you want the family to know?

VIGNETTE THREE

Ellen Donahue
Daughter

(Notes for Presenter: Ellen expresses her confusion over her mother’s demonstration of her need for intimacy. Ellen is afraid her mom would be embarrassed because she was prim and proper when she was younger. She is also embarrassed for herself. Charlotte has always been affectionate. She may just enjoy the closeness of another person. Even Ellen shared her mom got in bed with her after her husband died.)

1. What attributes did Ellen’s mother have when she was younger that concern Ellen with her mother’s behavior now?
2. What are possible reasons for Charlotte lying down with Laura?
3. What conversation would you have with Ellen to help her feel more comfortable with her mom’s actions?