



CONSUMER-TO-CONSUMER: TIPS FOR GETTING GOOD CARE AT AN ASSISTED LIVING FACILITY

Being Proactive

This section gives you advice and recommendations from the experts – the people who are actually receiving care and services in an assisted living/group home. Each of the individuals quoted below is a long-term care consumer who was interviewed and asked what suggestions they had about being proactive in an assisted living facility.

From Consumer to Consumer

- *Get to know your aides and talk with them. I learn about their families and their lives and how things are going for them. Sometimes I'm able to make suggestions about what they can do if they're having problems. That way I'm helping them and they're helping me. -Fran*
- *Join the resident council and any other council. We have a food council here that I participate in. Councils give us a chance to make improvements. -Joe*
- *Make yourself known to staff and tell staff what your needs are. -Jim*
- *Introduce yourself to the head person in charge so they know you. -Joe*
- *Communication is very important. If you can, have a one-on-one session with your aide. It can prevent or break down animosity that might arise. -Joe*
- *Know your rights. A lot of places make up their own rules, so you need to know what your rights really are. -Jim*
- *Be sure to do a really good job of marking your clothes with your name! This helps when things get lost. -Mary Jean*
- *Get to know the maintenance staff! This has helped me get extra help. One time my power chair wasn't working right and the maintenance person fixed it for me. -Jim*
- *Be aware of your own medical needs and take charge of your care. One time I had a foot ulcer that looked really bad. I was very concerned about it and asked the aides to look at it. Since it was night time, they just told me to show it to the Director of Nursing in the morning. I knew the condition of my ulcer was serious, so I called a friend to take me to the hospital. I ended up having a stent put in by a vascular surgeon. I would have lost my leg if I hadn't acted. -Jim*
- *Use good manners. Don't forget to say "please" and "thank you." If staff has done something extra special for me, I write a thank-you note. -Fran*
- *Speak up if you have suggestions for improvements. Everything I've suggested has been looked into and changes have been made. For instance, there wasn't enough time at lunch for residents to eat and enjoy their meals. Everything was hurried and rushed. I said something and now things have slowed down and are better. -Mary Jean*
- *Ask for things that you would like. For instance, bingo is a big part of activities here, but I wanted something that would make me use my brain. I asked the activities person if we could play something else. Now we play card games that make me think. -Bee*
- *Ask for help in a nice way. Don't be demanding. When I need assistance, I ask staff when they can help me. -Bee*
- *Get to know your ombudsman. -Jim*

For more information and resources, go to www.theconsumervoice.org

National Consumer Voice for Quality Long-Term Care (formerly NCCNHR) is a nonprofit organization founded in 1975 by Elma E. Holder to protect the rights, safety and dignity of American's long-term care residents.