



Key Questions to Ask Nursing Home Staff to Determine if the Facility is Focused on Providing Individualized Care

1. What type of nursing assistant assignment plan do you utilize? Do your nursing assistants (CNAs) care for the same group of residents each time they work or rotate the assignments after a period of time?

Best response - "We use consistent assignments. With few exceptions, our caregivers care for the same group of residents each time they come to work."

Rationale - Backed by research studies, consistent assignment of the same nursing assistants (CNAs) to an individual resident allows for the caregivers to remember the routines and preferences of each individual resident and provide individualized care.

2. Do you measure CNA turnover? If so, what is the facility's CNA turnover rate?

Best response - Any number under 40%.

Rationale - The national average is 70%. Research studies indicate a correlation between caregiver turnover and poor clinical care and service.

3. Do you measure licensed nursing staff turnover rate? If so, what is the facility's rate of licensed nurses?

Best response - Any number under 30%.

Rationale - The national average is 50%. Research studies indicate a correlation between licensed nurses turnover rate and poor clinical care and service.

4. What is the facility's policy regarding the use of agency nurses?

Best response - "Only our own nurses work here. However, in a dire short staffing emergency, we would call-in an agency nurse."

Rationale - Agency nurses are temporary workers who travel various healthcare centers. Therefore, they do not have time to develop a detailed knowledge about individual residents.

5. What is the facility's policy on bathing and shower schedules? Can my loved one be given a shower or bath when they choose?

Best response - "Yes. We can accommodate an individual's reasonable preference. Please let the admitting nurse know what his or her preference is."


Rationale - The facility should be able to flex its staffing practices to meet the individual resident's reasonable preference regarding bathing and showers.

6. What is the facility's policy on morning routines? Can my loved one be awakened in the morning according to their lifelong pattern?

Best response - "Yes. We can accommodate any individual's reasonable preference."

Rationale - The facility should be able to flex staffing practices to meet the individual resident's reasonable preference regarding morning routine.





7. What is the facility's policy regarding the main meal being served? Does the facility offer alternatives if my loved one does not like the main entrée?

Best response - "Yes. Let me show you a list of the alternatives that we always have on hand if someone does not like the main entrée being offered."

Rationale - The facility should have alternatives available to meet an individual's request.

8. May I see your facility's mission statement?

Best response - "Yes. Please let me show you our mission statement."

Rationale - Research studies indicate that leaders who can easily access their mission statement are leaders who are mission driven and believe in their organization's mission to serve. They are more likely to remind caregivers of their organization's mission.

9. How does the facility measure caregiver satisfaction? Do you conduct staff satisfaction surveys? If yes, what do you do with the satisfaction survey results?

Best response - "Yes. We measure our caregivers' morale by conducting staff satisfaction surveys. We analyze and act on the results. Our staff satisfaction is very important to us. We are always working to improve the quality of work life for our staff."

Rationale - Leaders who allow their staff an opportunity to complete staff satisfaction surveys are more likely to be committed to improving their quality of work life. Simply put, the happier the staff, the better the care the residents will receive.

10. What is the role here for family members? Do you have a family council and are we welcome at your facility?

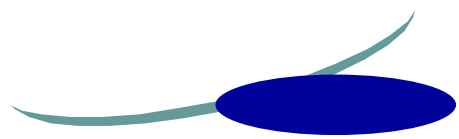
Best response - "We welcome and encourage family members to visit here any time, to volunteer, and to participate in our family council. I am happy to provide you with our family council schedule."

Rationale - Research indicates that families establish regular visiting patterns soon after a resident enters a facility; and support of families is a source of significant support for both the resident and the nursing home staff. Family members are keen observers of residents' quality of life. An active and involved family council has been proven to have a positive effect on the facility.

11. What types of recreational activities are offered here?

Best response - "We offer our residents a wide variety of activities and encourage them to participate in those of interest to them. Once we learn about the individuals interests, we inform them of the activities that match their interests on a daily basis."

Rationale - An individualized activities program based on individual interests has been shown to result in improved quality-of-life indicators.



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