

WHAT LIVING AS A RESIDENT CAN TEACH LONG TERM CARE STAFF: The Power of Empathy to Transform Care

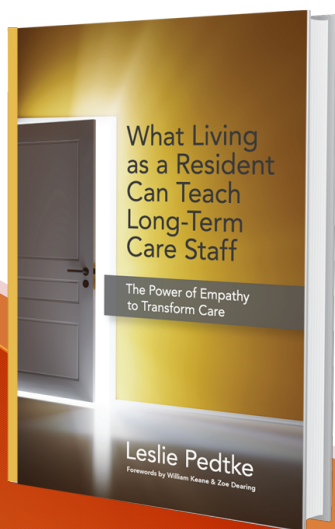
*Sympathizing with someone,
that's the easy part. To really be able
to learn empathy, you have to be
willing to walk in their shoes.”*
– Leslie Pedtke

“Loneliness does not come from having no people around you, but from being unable to communicate the things that seem important to you.” Carl Gustav Jung, Swiss Psychiatrist and Psychoanalyst

- Be the person that is willing to take a risk to change the culture of your community.
- Be the person who is committed to making a difference where you are.
- Be the person who stops leaving for the place that has better staffing, a bigger budget, or a more modern environment.
- Be the person who treats the problem, not the symptom.

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS RULES:

- Contestants must replace themselves on their work schedule for the duration of the time spent as a person in the nursing home.
- Contestants may not leave the premises unless it is on an outing sponsored by the nursing home. If a contestant needs to leave it must be approved by the Administrator and their time gone will be taken off total time stayed.
- Based on bed availability – it is preferred that All contestants participate at the same time.
- Contestants must simulate the diagnosis drawn when they move in. Refusing to participate fully may result in disqualification from the contest.
- Contestants agree to daily “challenges” to simulate life in the nursing home.
- Contestants agree to keep a journal and be videotaped for the purpose of education and training.
- Contestants agree to participate in educational programs.
- Contestants will be paid for the time they would have been regularly scheduled.



THE POWER OF EMPATHY TO TRANSFORM CARE

POLICY OF ELDER SHADOWING PROGRAM

It is the policy that all new employees participate in the Elder Shadowing Program in order to gain a better understanding of what it is like to live in long term care

All new employees will be assigned an elder to shadow by their immediate supervisor. You must shadow an elder on each shift: Days, Evenings and Midnights.

During your Elder Shadowing experience, you must 'live' like the elder you have been assigned to. This means eating the same foods, attending the same activities, and having the same level of dependency they do. After you have completed your program, please write a short paragraph on what you learned and how it will affect how your relationship with those living in our long-term care community.

TIPS ON HOW TO SET UP THIS PROGRAM IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Set expectations and goals for what you want to accomplish through the program.

Decide what the rules of the program will be for staff in your community.

Include everyone in a conversation about the participants' expectations as well as those of the staff who will be responsible for caring for them.

Meet with your resident council and include their family members in the conversations as well.

Let your state surveyors and your insurance company know what your community is trying to accomplish through the program.

Find out how many staff want to participate and pick a move-in date.

Make up diagnoses

Involve a staff participant's family

Move-in day!

Decide how you want to set up the challenges.

Ask the participants to write down how they are feeling every day.

Have cameras ready!

Ask a lot of questions of the participants, the elders, and the families while the program is going on.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Leslie Pedtke, L.N.H.A., created *Through the Looking Glass* while working as Administrator for Aviston Countryside Manor. She is now Educator for Quality Improvement for King Management Company. Through her experience of more than 20 years, she has built a foundation of person-directed care at Aviston as well as at King Management's other long-term care and assisted living communities.

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