Presentations on the Preservation of Residents’ Civil Rights for Skilled Nursing Facility Staff in Los Angeles: A Grant Proposal

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Introduction

Problem

- Beginning in the 1970s, the mistreatment of older adults in nursing homes has been identified as a serious problem that potentially affects the quality of life of over three million United States residents (Gittler, 2008; National Center of Elder Abuse, 2012).
- The 1987 federal Nursing Home Reform Law and California codes provide lists of rights guaranteed to nursing home residents within California. However, nursing homes are often cited for violating these rights (Gittler, 2008; Department of Health & Human Services, 2008). More than 91% of nursing homes nationwide were cited for deficiencies, including failure to respect resident’s rights (Administration on Aging, 2012).
- While there are significant programs in place to protect residents’ rights such as state licensing agencies and Ombudsman programs, they cannot fully protect the rights of nursing home residents (Gittler, 2008).

Goals

- To increase the quality of life for nursing home residents and decrease the violation of resident rights in skilled nursing facilities.
- Nursing home staff will be more equipped and knowledgeable regarding resident rights and how to handle challenging situations.
Social Work Relevance

- Providing dignity and respect to nursing home residents is a core value expressed in nursing home regulations as well as in the National Association of Social Work (NASW) Code of Ethics (Center for Advocacy of Nursing Home Reform, 2013).

- The medical model has traditionally limited the autonomy of residents by offering choices aimed at changing a resident’s undesirable circumstance (Ruggiano, 2012). Social workers have the responsibility of insisting that nursing home residents have their full range of autonomy upheld.

- Serving oppressed residents within nursing homes, promoting social justice through educating nursing home staff regarding the rights of residents, and upholding the dignity and worth of residents as individuals worthy of their basic rights under the law are values consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics.

- An indirect benefit to the social work profession would be freeing up time for social workers employed in skilled nursing facilities to focus on more clinical aspects of social work instead of dealing with quality of care issues.
Cross-Cultural Relevance

- Residents from cultures who are not Anglo American or Caucasian are more likely to choose an approach involving the entire family instead of a more autonomous approach (Winzelberg, 2005). Consistent with the theme of self-determination, a residents’ desire for autonomy cannot be assumed.

- Promoting nursing home residents’ dignity and respect includes consideration of food and activities that enhance the quality of life for a culturally diverse population (Hutchinson et al, 2011).

- Racial disparities appear to exist within standard nursing home care, particularly among African-American residents. These residents were found to have a lower functional status and an increased likelihood of incontinence, and were less likely to have a toileting plan (Center for Disease Control, 2008). Ensuring equal treatment for residents of all ethnic backgrounds is a fundamental value in the NASW Code of Ethics that requires attention and advocacy (NASW, 2008).
Methods

Target Population
- The target population for this grant proposal in certified nursing assistants and nurses who provide direct care to residents and are employed in over 400 skilled nursing facilities in Long Angeles County, California.

Strategies Used in Selecting a Funding Source
- Searches were completed at local, state, and national levels for a thorough exploration of options. Websites were visited including www.rants.gov, www.tgci.com, and www.lbnp.org. The online Foundation Directory was a vast source of information and the Long Beach Nonprofit Partnership was a valuable resource.

Identifying the funding source selected
- After exploring and ruling out several potential funding sources, the Marin Community Foundation was chosen since their interest is in supporting the development of an organized, efficient system serving the rapidly growing aging population.
Methods (Continued)

**Sources used for the Needs Assessment**
- Extensive literature reviews were conducted to support the need for a training program to overcome these frequent violations of nursing home resident rights.
- Discussions with the Wise & Healthy Aging Ombudsman director and staff also helped inform the writer.

**Program Budget**
- A total of $324,950 in funding will be requested to develop and deliver the training over the course of a year.
- The budget includes the salaries for five full-time Master’s of Social Workers (MSWs), with one social worker for the lead trainer position.
- Other budget items include laptops, cell phones, printing, mailings, office supplies, copying, and administrative oversight.
- Wise & Healthy Aging will donate office space and office phones as in-kind donations.
Grant Proposal

Program Summary and Description
- The interactive training will consist of 90 minute trainings over the course of four consecutive weeks.
- PowerPoint presentations will be written for each of the four weeks, along with scenarios, role playing, and protocols for each of the topics covered.
- The format will include a welcome time with a key question to stimulate conversation, a PowerPoint presentation with opportunities for discussion, and will close with scenarios or role playing to demonstrate the rights discussed. A handout explaining how to handle common situations related to the right discussed will be provided.

Population Served
- The proposed program will target the front line staff who provide the majority of care to nursing home residents. This includes certified nursing assistants and nurses. Department managers, physical/occupational/speech therapists, dietary staff, and activity/social service aides also have the potential to benefit and would also be encouraged to attend the trainings.
Grant Proposal (Continued)

Program Objectives

- Increasing the awareness of nursing home staff regarding what resident rights are and how they are often violated.
- Conducting scenarios and role playing with staff in order to increase their skills and knowledge of how to handle challenging situations that are often encountered in the nursing home setting.
- Providing a protocol on how to handle frequent situations that could jeopardize the rights of nursing home residents.
- Facilitating a supportive environment where staff can express the challenges of caring for dependent adults and receive feedback with effective strategies.

Program Evaluation

- The success of the program will be measured by a decrease in the number of complaint reports from the Ombudsman office following the training. In addition, a questionnaire will be developed and a random sampling of resident satisfaction will be completed prior to the training and 3 months following the training. These questionnaires will be reviewed quarterly to gauge the success of the program and to make changes as needed.
- A pre-test and post-test will be given to the staff to measure an increase in knowledge and ability to handle challenging situations related to resident care. The tool will be utilized on a quarterly basis to evaluate the effectiveness of the training and to adjust the materials as needed.
Lessons Learned & Implications for Social Work

- The ability to write a grant proposal is an important skill for a master's level social worker, particularly as opportunities arise to go into management roles. Grant writing offers possibilities for funding and implementing innovative projects and fulfilling needs within a community (Wurmser, 2006).

- This training program will provide social workers with opportunities to utilize advocacy skills for an oppressed segment of the population and to promote the dignity and worth of individuals, which is based upon the values expressed in the NASW code of ethics.

- If the proposal became a mandated long-term policy, it would have the potential to decrease the number of resident rights violations and complaints within nursing homes, which would in turn increase the quality of nursing home care within the United States.
References


