

Effective Engagement with Residents

Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate, Empower

Primary focuses of management and service programs should revolve around helping people cope and adapt, solving problems, addressing all clients' needs, and resolving conflicts. Extra time spent to assess the needs of individuals and supporting them through change is extremely important when it comes to receiving any engagement. People do not need assistance simply because of their background, and not all residents have the same need, which makes it especially vital to ensure you are engaging all your residences.

- ❖ Consider the diversity of your residents, not only on a general level but individual interaction is extremely important.
 - Be inclusive to a diverse range of people and how to address any barriers they may have to participating.
 - Keep traditional communications alive (face to face, mail, newspapers, printed material), while also implementing any new forms of communication (social media, email, etc.) for residents to use.
 - Engage in ways that are culturally appropriate and sensitive to the needs of people, no matter their background (cultural, religious, sexuality, etc.).
- ❖ Conferences, focus groups, and workshops: Residents are often more willing to come along and provide valuable input into what you are engaging on or informing them about.
- ❖ Try to consider including a support person, like a family member or friend or representative of an organization, especially to people who have cognitive impairment or where there is little English spoken.
- ❖ Do not assume that because people are older or may have a disability that they are not able to contribute or add value to certain decisions. In fact, take more time to discuss and carefully decide on any decisions made for your organization.
- ❖ **LISTEN TO THEM.**

SAGE ADVICE

S: Simplify. Not everything has to be in technical terms! Use words and terms that people are familiar with for people to understand.

A: Assure. Do not assume that people are dumb, deaf, or blind, especially if they are older or have a disability. Assure to them that their views are important through kindness and involvement in all forms.

G: Give information. Share information in ways that people prefer. For instance, writing or demonstrating information can be helpful.

E: Ease into it. Sharing too much, too quick can be extremely overwhelming. Allow people time to process information they can speak on.

A: Acknowledge. Recognize, engage, and listen.

D: Discovery: Just because someone acknowledges that you are speaking does not mean they understand. Ask questions to see if they comprehend.

V: Value: Respect your residents by using their proper name. Avoid using overly friendly slang when discussing an issue or topic.

I: Individualize: Acknowledge language barriers and be sensitive to different values, cultural beliefs and changes associated with natural aging.

C: Communicate: Avoid telling people what to do. Try and focus on what is most important for people to know and consider. But also make sure they recognize what is required of them.

E: Empathize: Try to understand a situation from the other perspective. Watch for feedback and cues to push communication and information sharing. But be sensitive to a personal situation.

Focus Groups: A group of people (smaller to medium-sized groups) explore and respond to an issue in a structured way that is facilitated.

❖ **Advantages:**

- Useful for a detailed analysis of a particular issue.
- Can involve training and the use of peer facilitators
- Can trigger further discussion and group discussion.

❖ **Disadvantages:**

- May not be statistically representative of all residents.
- May not be a suitable forum for everyone to discuss personal issues.

❖ **Suggestions:**

- Focus groups should be used as a part of a larger engagement process to analyze and comment on particular issues.
- To increase representativeness, peak, community sector organizations and schools can run focus groups.

Forums: Coming together to explore and share ideas about a topic or an issue. Forums are facilitated and usually involve the development of solutions and decisions. A public meeting format is not recommended as a forum.

❖ **Advantages:**

- Can involve a large representative sample of residents.
- Allows people the opportunity to interact with others.
- Can develop the communication skills of younger or even older residents.
- Can be empowering for everyone if they are able to influence the forum's agenda and contribute to the outcomes.

❖ **Disadvantages:**

- May not be a suitable forum for everyone to discuss personal issues.
- Need substantial planning and monitoring.
- Not everyone feels comfortable speaking in front of large groups.

❖ **Suggestions:**

- Ensure residents are adequately prepared to discuss the issues.
- Creative presentations can be part of the forum and inspire discussions.
- Break into smaller groups.

Interviews: Generates an actual face-to-face discussion regarding a specific topic or issue. Can be informal or formal but must be structured.

❖ **Advantages:**

- Can provide participants with the opportunity to talk about issues that may be difficult in large groups.
- Can be a comfortable and relaxed process that inspires a rapport with the interviewer and participant.

❖ **Disadvantages:**

- Will not be representative of all older people.
- Can be intimidating to those that have little experience with being interviewed or with limited speaking/English skills.
- No group interaction or ability to talk or brainstorm ideas with other people.
- Unsuitable if a large sample is needed.
- Unsuitable if the participant or observer has limited time.
- Can be difficult to recruit interviewees (or even interviewers).

❖ **Suggestions:**

- Provide some skill development for the participant particularly if they have never been interviewed before.

Surveys: Formal process in which people respond to a set list of questions. Surveys can be physical or electronic.

❖ **Advantages:**

- Useful and quick method of gaining the views of a large cross section of residents.
- Can be physical (paper or through phone) or can be electronic via an email link or posted online.
- Allows for anonymity.
- Useful to include people that are geographically isolated.
- Can be completed at the convenience of the participant.

❖ **Disadvantages:**

- Difficult to determine the seriousness of responses.
- Literacy abilities and clarity determines the quality and accuracy of responses.
- Residents, who are from non-English speaking backgrounds, may not find surveys accessible.
- No group interaction or ability to talk or brainstorm ideas with other people.

❖ **Suggestions**

- Ensure that surveys are short and clear.
- Be clear about the purpose of the survey.
- Provide language support or translate the survey.
- Ensure adequate options and include opportunities for comments.
- Make sure that all residents have the opportunity to participate in the survey process.

Reference Group: A group of residents that regularly provide feedback and support to government and provide the views of older people directly into government policies and programs.

❖ **Advantages:**

- Enables those receiving feedback to have an easy and ongoing access to a group of older people.
- Can be a starting point for other engagement processes for government.
- Enables older people to have direct feedback and input to those in higher positions of power on a regular basis.
- Can provide a forum in which people can develop skills, experience, and confidence to feel included in their properties.

❖ **Disadvantages:**

- May exclude residents/may not be representative of everyone living on the property.
- Can limit participation from marginalized and diverse groups or those who may not have been involved previously.
- Requires resources to support the group.
- Formal meetings require a regular, ongoing commitment by older people to the committee (this may be difficult for participants with other commitments).

❖ **Suggestions:**

- Allow these individuals to establish the group in their own terms of references and purpose.
- Informal networks can also be effective.

Resident Survey Form for a Family Development

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to you. My name is _____ [Insert name] and I am the Service Coordinator for _____ [Insert Development Name]. All residents are requested to complete this survey. Your answers will help me to arrange for activities and services that are of interest to you and your family. I encourage and appreciate your response. Please return the completed survey to me by _____ [insert date]. After I receive your survey, I will contact you to schedule a meeting. I would like to discuss your ideas about programs that should be offered at _____ [Insert Development Name] and give you information about activities that are currently available. Survey responses and our discussions are strictly confidential. Thank you in advance for your participation.

Family Name: _____ Apt. #: _____

1. How many children are in your household? Skip if not applicable.

Girls

1-2 () 3-4 () 5+ () Age Range: _____

Boys

1-2 () 3-4 () 5+ () Age Range: _____

2. Do you need child care and/or day care for your children? If so, when?

Skip if not applicable.

Yes () No ()

() day care while parent(s) are working or in school

() after school care for school age children

() evening care when parents are working or in school

Other:

4. Would you like information on the following services or programs? Check all that apply:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Utility/Fuel Assistance | <input type="checkbox"/> Child/Day Care |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tutoring Programs | <input type="checkbox"/> Services for the Disabled |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drug/Alcohol Prevention | <input type="checkbox"/> Medical Assistance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> WIC | <input type="checkbox"/> Medical Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employment Opportunities | <input type="checkbox"/> Food Stamps |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education/GED/ Literacy | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Legal Advocacy | <input type="checkbox"/> Translation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> TANF | <input type="checkbox"/> Prenatal Care Services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Continuing Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Elderly Assistance/60+ programs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vocational Training/Career Development | |

5. What activities would you want to see implemented in your development? Check all that apply.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Residential Committees | <input type="checkbox"/> Painting, Drawing, Art |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sewing, Knitting, Crocheting | <input type="checkbox"/> Gardening |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Group Exercise Classes | <input type="checkbox"/> Bingo/Card Games |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing, hiking, outdoor activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Mentorship Programs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cooking Activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Book Clubs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adult Education | <input type="checkbox"/> After School Tutoring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employment/Job Readiness | <input type="checkbox"/> ESL Classes |

Other: _____

6. What activities would you be willing to assist with and organize?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Residential Committees | <input type="checkbox"/> Painting, Drawing, Art |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sewing, Knitting, Crocheting | <input type="checkbox"/> Gardening |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Group Exercise Classes | <input type="checkbox"/> Bingo/Card Games |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fishing, hiking, outdoor activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Mentorship Programs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cooking Activities | <input type="checkbox"/> Book Clubs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adult Education | <input type="checkbox"/> After School Tutoring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Employment/Job Readiness | <input type="checkbox"/> ESL Classes |

Resident Survey for a Senior Development

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to you. My name is _____ [Insert name] and I am the Service Coordinator for _____ [Insert Development Name]. All residents are requested to complete this survey. Your answers will help me to arrange for activities and services that are of interest to you and your family. I encourage and appreciate your response. Please return the completed survey to me by _____ [insert date]. After I receive your survey, I will contact you to schedule a meeting. I would like to discuss your ideas about programs that should be offered at _____ [Insert Development Name] and give you information about activities that are currently available. Survey responses and our discussions are strictly confidential. Thank you in advance for your participation.

Circle **Yes** or **No** in each of these columns:

Service	Would you use these services if they were available?	
Help with routine household chores	Yes	No
Help with "deep cleaning" household chores	Yes	No
Help with shopping	Yes	No
Help with bathing/grooming or dressing	Yes	No
Community Dining	Yes	No
Help with completing Medicaid/Medicare forms	Yes	No
Help with meal preparation	Yes	No
Assistance with banking	Yes	No

Health Screenings		
*Blood Sugar	Yes	No
*Podiatrist	Yes	No
*Weight	Yes	No
*Eye Screening/Glaucoma	Yes	No
Transportation		
*Public Transportation	Yes	No
Workshops & Presentations		
*Alzheimer's	Yes	No
*Smoking	Yes	No
*Stroke Prevention	Yes	No
*Medication tips and tools	Yes	No
*High Blood Pressure	Yes	No
*Financial Security	Yes	No
*Chronic Health Diseases	Yes	No
*Other:		
In need of State Documents (Power of attorney, wills, living wills, etc.)	Yes	No

Other comments/suggestions or concerns for the Service Coordinator?

All information is confidential.

Can the service coordinator call on you for more information? Yes () No ()

Name: _____

Apt. Number: _____

1. What activities would you want to see implemented in your development? Check all that apply.

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Residential Committees () | Arts and Crafts () |
| Sewing, Knitting, Crocheting () | Gardening () |
| Group Exercise Classes () | Bingo/Card Games () |
| Fishing, hiking, outdoor activities () | Mentorship Programs () |
| Cooking Activities () | Book Clubs () |
| Adult Education () | ESL Classes () |
| Employment/Job Readiness () | Sports League () |
| Scrapbooking () | Volunteering Program () |
| Other: _____ | |

2. What activities would you be willing to assist with and organize?

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| Residential Committees () | Arts and Crafts () |
| Sewing, Knitting, Crocheting () | Gardening () |
| Group Exercise Classes () | Bingo/Card Games () |
| Fishing, hiking, outdoor activities () | Mentorship Programs () |
| Cooking Activities () | Book Clubs () |
| Adult Education () | ESL Classes () |
| Employment/Job Readiness () | Sports League () |
| Scrapbooking () | Volunteering Program () |
| Other: _____ | |