

Finding Your Voice: Advocating for Yourself, Your Department, and Your Residents

Lunch & Learn Workshop
Optional Pre-Conference Session



Today's Speaker

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Why This Session Matters

- Activity professionals are essential to quality of life
- Yet their voices are often underrepresented



Session Roadmap

- Advocacy fundamentals
- Regulatory support
- Confidence strategies
- Yes-first approach
- Activity Council connection



Let's Level Set

- Advocacy is education, not conflict



Quick Table Talk

- When have you felt unheard?
- What decisions impacted your department without your input?



Activities and the IDT

- Activities support psychosocial well-being, dementia care, and resident rights



Where Advocacy Breaks Down

- Budget pushback
- Lack of understanding
- Being excluded from meetings



Your Power Tool: Regulations

- Federal and Ohio regulations support meaningful activities



Ohio Regulatory Anchors

- Resident Rights
- Quality of Life
- Person-Centered Care Planning



Activity: Regulation Match

- Match resident requests to regulatory principles



Speaking the Language of Leadership

- Risk
- Survey outcomes
- Resident satisfaction



My Advocacy Formula

- One situation where I need to advocate:
- Who do I need to speak with:
- Which regulation or principle supports this:
- Resident impact if unmet:
- My next step:



Confidence Is a Skill

- Preparation builds confidence



The Confidence Formula

- Name the issue
- Reference guidance
- Describe resident impact
- Offer a solution



Practice Scenario

- “We don’t have the budget”



Surveyors Are Not the Enemy

- Surveyors assess intent, systems, and resident experience



Talking to Surveyors

- Answer clearly
- Use resident-centered language
- Reference care plans



Gaining Autonomy

- Documentation
- Consistency
- Outcome tracking



From Permission to Partnership

- Shift from asking to collaborating



Leading With Yes

- Honor resident choice while managing risk



Yes-First Formula

- Resident request:
- Initial concern:
- How can we say yes safely:
- Supports or modifications needed:
- Documentation or care plan update needed:



Yes-First Scenarios

- Late-night activities
- Community outings
- Cultural requests



Professional Growth Is Advocacy

- Education
- Council involvement
- Mentorship



Why Associations Matter

- Shared voice
- Education
- Support



Claiming Your Seat at the Table

- Care planning
- Quality meetings
- Budget discussions



Scenario 1 – Budget Pushback

Scenario

- You request supplies for adaptive programming. Leadership responds, “There is no budget.”

Discussion Prompts

- What regulation or requirement supports this request?
- How does this impact resident rights and quality of life?
- How do you reframe the request to leadership?



Scenario 2 – Surveyor Question

Scenario

- A surveyor asks how activities support a resident with dementia who often isolates.

Discussion Prompts

- What language do you use when answering?
- What documentation supports your response?
- How do you connect activities to care planning?



Scenario 3 – Yes-First Challenge

Scenario

- A resident wants to attend a community event that staff perceive as risky.

Discussion Prompts

- What is the actual risk?
- How can resident choice be supported?
- What safeguards or supports could be put in place?



Reflection Activity

- One place to speak up
- One regulation to use
- One yes-first action



Key Takeaways

- Your voice matters
- Regulations support you
- Quality of life is compliance



Transition to Activity Council

- Apply learning through connection and discussion



Ohio & Federal References

- Resident Rights under Ohio Administrative Code 3701-17
- Quality of Life requirements aligned with 42 CFR §483.24
- Comprehensive care planning requirements under 42 CFR §483.21
- Psychosocial well-being expectations
- ODH survey emphasis on meaningful engagement and choice
- Complaint investigations frequently reference activity access and resident autonomy



Thank You

- Thank you for advocating for residents



What questions do you have?

