CREATING AN ENJOYABLE DINING EXPERIENCE FOR RESIDENTS

Improvement Recommendations

1. Allowing residents to choose the time and place they wish to eat goes a long way in creating an enjoyable dining experience. This is particularly true of breakfast. Consider how residents can wake up when they wish and eat their breakfast when they are ready, if you are not doing this already.

2. It is important to remember that meal time in the homes where our residents raised their families is very different from meal time in the homes of our staff. Every effort should be made to create an atmosphere similar to their homes.
   - Table cloths
   - Cloth napkins
   - Proper tableware
   - Assistive devices are provided as needed so resident can continue to feed themselves.
   - Tables are set in a welcoming manner.
   - No television on in the background unless specifically requested by residents
   - Conversation is encouraged among table mates.
   - When residents require assistance with eating, it is done in a dignified manner and not at a horseshoe table with one person simultaneously feeding 2-3 residents.

3. Set the standard for quality food and meal presentation. Use photos of the food to accompany the menu to show dining staff the expectation for meal garnishing and plate appearance.

4. Communicate the plans and options for meal and dining services and snacks to all staff:
   - Conduct in-service training with dietary staff on the menus and recipes.
   - Make a menu calendar available to the residents and their families.
   - Offer a selective menu allowing for choice of foods.
   - Provide restaurant-style dining, family dining, and/or cafeteria-style dining as appropriate.

5. Ensure snacks are made available in an appealing manner.
   - Obtain input from resident council on the types of things they would like available on a regular basis:
     - Coffee, tea, juices
     - Fruits
     - Sweets
     - Ethnic or regional snacks

6. Discuss with the food service director and dietician the process in place for residents to provide and update food preferences and special requests.

7. Direct observations of meal service may help to improve service delivery and quality of meals:
   - The presence of a “mealtime monitor” sends the message to staff that management considers this to be an important part of the day. The monitor helps to reinforce positive staff behaviors.
   - Observations may include:
     - A choice of food and beverages are offered.
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- Positive interactions between staff and resident occur
- Alternatives are offered when the resident doesn’t care for the items being served
  - Residents receive necessary assistance with eating without compromising their dignity.
  - Residents have a choice in seating arrangement.
  - Accommodations are made for those in wheelchairs.
  - The atmosphere in the dining room is peaceful and not chaotic.
  - If there is music playing, it should not be distracting for those with Alzheimer’s disease.

8. Train staff in the customer service aspect of food and dining.

9. Train staff in how to properly clean, handle, and maintain service ware:
   - Matching china, glass, and silverware in good condition set the tone for quality meal service.
   - Consider using tablecloths and non-disposable tableware.
   - Fresh flowers enhance the appearance of the table.

10. Train staff in how to set a dining room table:
    - A neat, orderly, clean, and properly appointed dining table assures residents that details are being monitored and that every effort is being made to provide them with a satisfying dining experience.

11. Provide a space for residents to enjoy meals with guests.

12. Recognize holidays and special events with appropriate menus and decorations.

13. Recognize religious and cultural traditions related to food.