

THE PROBLEM-SOLVING PROCESS

A. TRUE/FALSE: Circle the correct answer.

- T F** 1. If a family member asks you to investigate a complaint, you must do so even if the resident asks you not to proceed.
- T F** 2. An interviewer should never completely believe or disbelieve everything a person says.
- T F** 3. Information relating to a case must be kept confidential only if the resident asks that it be kept confidential.
- T F** 4. The purpose of investigation is to determine whether the complaint is valid and to gather the information necessary to resolve it.
- T F** 5. Confidentiality is easier to maintain when investigating complaints in residential care facilities because there are fewer staff to "watch" your actions as a LTCO.
- T F** 6. In addition to complaint resolution at the facility level, LTCO also engage in systems advocacy to change policies or laws affecting large numbers of residents.
- T F** 7. It is more important to resolve a problem quickly than to keep the resident informed of your actions.
- T F** 8. A LTCO may review a resident's financial records only with the administrator's permission.
- T F** 9. The ultimate goal of the LTCO approach to problem solving is to help staff become more responsive to residents and residents better equipped to directly express their concerns to staff.
- T F** 10. If a LTCO receives a complaint from an anonymous source, the LTCO can disregard the complaint because follow-up will be impossible.
- T F** 11. A LTCO tries to resolve a complaint within the facility before turning to outside agencies unless the LTCO knows the administrator will refuse to act on the complaint.
- T F** 12. If there is an issue between two residents and the LTCO is asked to intervene, the LTCO decides which resident has the stronger case and works to resolve the issue to that resident's satisfaction without representing the other resident.
- T F** 13. An absence of complaints means that all the residents are receiving quality care or experiencing an acceptable quality of life in that facility.
- T F** 14. A LTCO investigates complaints using the same standard of proof that surveyors and law enforcement officials use.

- T F** 15. Before resolving a problem, it is very important to understand what the complainant wants as an outcome.
- T F** 16. Listening for what is not being said is an important part of interviewing.
- T F** 17. If a complaint is not verified, there is nothing more a LTCO can do but to close the case.
- T F** 18. Serving as an impartial mediator is the role a LTCO uses most frequently in resolving problems.
- T F** 19. Knowing what community resources are available to assist residents can be helpful in resolving problems.
- T F** 20. An important part of the work of a LTCO is to achieve long-range goals for improving the long term care system.
- T F** 21. An advocate is committed to striving for and asserting the expressed interest of an individual or group.
- T F** 22. In general, a reportable LTCO complaint case is one where the LTCO invested more time and effort than simply relaying a concern to staff.
- T F** 23. It is important in resolving problems to have only one acceptable solution and to stick with it.

B. FILL IN THE BLANKS

1. List three common sources of information for investigations.
 - (a) _____
 - (b) _____
 - (c) _____
2. Confidential information about a resident may be released only with the written permission of the _____, or _____, or by _____.
3. Among the things you should consider when preparing for an interview is the setting. List two characteristics of a good setting.
 - (a) _____
 - (b) _____
4. List three methods that you might use to verify a complaint.

(a) _____

(b) _____

(c) _____

5. List three tips for effective note-taking.

(a) _____

(b) _____

(c) _____

6. After a complaint is resolved, you need to _____ to be sure that the resolution has been implemented.

7. Sometimes agencies or organizations other than the nursing facility must be involved in complaint resolution. List two other agencies or organizations that might be helpful.

(a) _____

(b) _____

C. READ AND CAREFULLY FOLLOW THE DIRECTIONS FOR EACH QUESTION.

1. Ms. Jones tells you she has a problem she would like to discuss, but she is afraid of what might happen. The least appropriate response is to tell her that:

- you want to help and promise nothing will happen to her if she tells you.
- you want to know what's bothering her and will discuss it with no one else if she so desires.
- you are there to help and will keep anything she says confidential.
- it is illegal for anyone to retaliate if you complain.

2. Mrs. Sanchez's husband calls you and says the home is neglecting his wife. They leave her up in the wheelchair until she is exhausted don't change her promptly when she soils herself and give her food that is cold. Your first response should be:

- That happens a lot, I will see what I can do.
- I will tell the administrator to check on Mrs. Sanchez.
- I know you are upset, Mr. Sanchez, I will investigate the problem and call you after my visit tomorrow. May I use your name when I talk to the staff?
- Actually, I'm quite surprised to hear this. That home provides very good care. I'm sure it's not quite that bad. Are you sure you are not exaggerating some, Mr. Sanchez?
- Let me check and see if it's really as bad as you say it is.

3. Mrs. Lawrence is particularly "down" and says she is not feeling well because of the way the aides talk to her. Your FIRST response should be:

- Which aides give you the most trouble?
- But you were so happy last week. I'll bet you'll be feeling as perky when I see you next week!
- I noticed that you look a little sad. I'd like to hear what's going on.
- I'll look into it right away. May I use your name?

4. Mrs. Johnson, a 92 year old lady, tells you her clothes are not being returned to her when they go to the laundry. The nursing aide tells you Mrs. Johnson just does not remember what clothes she has at the home. The actions that would be appropriate to take would be: (**Check all that apply.**)

- Talk with the laundry person to find out the system used for returning clothes to the residents after laundering.
- Help Mrs. Johnson make a list of the clothes she has at the home.
- Ask Mrs. Johnson's daughter if she has noticed any clothing missing when she visits her father.
- Discuss the problem with the State Long Term Care Ombudsman.
- Ask to see Mrs. Johnson's medical records.

5. You are conducting an interview with a resident, you should: (**Check all appropriate responses.**)

- Use only close-ended questions so that you get all the important facts.
- Explain to the resident what actions you plan to use to investigate and resolve the complaint and obtain their agreement to the plan.
- Use only open-ended questions so that the resident can explain the problem in his/her own way.
- Allow the resident to have complete control over the interview.
- Try to establish rapport before addressing the problem.
- Tell the resident how you will use the information.

6. You receive a phone call from a staff member who wishes to remain anonymous. She reports that the facility is understaffed on the 3 to 11 shift. The actions you might take are: (**Check all appropriate responses.**)

- Plan to visit during the early evening shift.
- Immediately report the problem to the Department of Public Health, Licensing and Certification.
- Ask the administrator if the staff person has recently had any disciplinary action taken against her or her.
- Review the regulations for staffing requirements.

- Contact the local newspaper regarding possible neglect.
 - Listen carefully for residents' concerns about their care in the evening shift.
 - Immediately go to the administrator and ask him/her if it is true.
7. During a visit, you see Mr. Jacobs sitting in the activity area wearing a vest restraint. He is calling, "Get me out of here! I feel like a captive animal! I want to be free!" The actions you might take are: (**Check all appropriate responses.**)
- Walk over and untie Mr. Jacobs's restraint.
 - Talk with Mr. Jacobs to find out more information.
 - Reassure Mr. Jacobs that being restrained is for his own good.
 - Go to the staff person in charge and ask that Mr. Jacobs be released from the restraint.
 - Walk closer and carefully observe Mr. Jacobs's appearance, behavior, and position.
 - Call Mr. Jacobs's daughter and tell her she needs to do something about the restraint.
 - Call the Department of Public Health, Licensing and Certification, and file a complaint.
 - Check to see if other residents are physically restrained.