

Chapter 2

Equipping California Long-Term Care Ombudsman Representatives for Effective Advocacy: A Basic Curriculum

THE AGING PROCESS TEACHING NOTES

Curriculum Resource Material for
Local Long-Term Care Ombudsman Programs

Developed by Sara S. Hunt, Consultant

Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman

California Department of Aging
1300 National Drive, Suite 200
Sacramento, California 95834
Telephone: (916) 419-7510

www.aging.ca.gov
stateomb@aging.ca.gov

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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

This chapter provides basic information about the processes that occur throughout life, and particularly in the later years, that are considered normal aging. It also discusses common illnesses in later life and the effects of medications. Ombudsman representatives must be able to work with older individuals and avoid stereotypes. Ombudsman representatives (LTCO) should be alert to the difference between the effects of normal aging and the results of diseases that are experienced by some elders.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this chapter, LTCO will know:

- Normal age related changes;
- Myths and stereotypes about aging;
- Myths and stereotypes about care; and
- Common illnesses and treatments
- The role of LTCO when poor care practices are encountered

BASIS FOR APPROACH

Instead of relying on lecture or simulation exercises to teach LTCO key aspects of aging and how age related factors impact communication and care-giving, this curriculum recommends interjecting application tips about various aspects of aging throughout the curriculum. Find ways to ask students how they would approach a resident who has advanced cognitive impairments or a resident who has significant visual impairments. When discussing restraints and the right to be free from restraints, include questions and dialogue about the physiological and psychological impact of restraints and good care practices without restraints. Tips on integrating aging content in other chapters are included in the teaching notes for those chapters.

INTENDED USE

This chapter is intended to be a resource for LTCO and for individuals who teach LTCO. An engaging supplement to this chapter is the interactive module, *Aging*, developed and shared by the Louisiana Long Term Care Ombudsman Program, Governor's Office of Elderly Affairs. The interactive module is on the CD distributed with this curriculum by the California State LTCOP. If an additional copy is needed, contact the State LTCOP.

SUGGESTIONS FOR USING THE CURRICULUM

There are several ways to use these materials.

- **Individual self-study:** Distribute the curriculum resource material and the *Aging* module on CD and ask students to read the resource material and to check their knowledge by using the CD before attending the class room training on other topics of the *Basic Curriculum for Long-Term Care Ombudsman Representatives*. An understanding of the information on aging can be demonstrated via approaches to case studies and class room discussion on related topics. Consider crediting students with one or two hours of training time if they complete this self-study component.

Variation on self-study: If a student has a background in gerontology or long-term care, working through the interactive module first could provide a review of relevant information. If any items are missed or spark curiosity, the person can read the related section of this resource material for further information.

- **Combination of self-study and class room:** Ask students to read the resource material prior to class. Use one and one-half to two hours of class room time to quickly review salient points about aging to be sure that the students understand the primary content. Refer to the Teaching Outline for suggested time frames and tips on covering this content in class.
- **Stand alone resource:** This chapter can also be used as a stand alone tool. It can be shared in electronic or hard copy versions for individual reading, assignments or to supplement a lecture. To facilitate learning and emphasize important points, a LTCOP could develop application questions to accompany this chapter, keeping in mind that you are not training gerontologists but are equipping LTCO to be effective advocates.

Whatever method is used, the emphasis in training needs to be:

- What does this content mean to residents?
- What can caregivers do to support resident abilities and functioning?
- What is an appropriate ombudsman representative action?

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Purpose

This chapter provides an understanding of the normal aging process and key points applicable to long-term care ombudsman representatives (LTCO) interaction with residents.

Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this chapter, LTCO will know:

- Normal age related changes;
- Myths and stereotypes about aging;
- Myths and stereotypes about care;
- Common illnesses and treatments; and
- The role of LTCO when poor care practices are encountered.

I. The Process of Aging

(Thirty minutes to one hour if this is covered as a stand alone topic in a class room setting.)

A. Engage students in a dialog to cover the key points in this chapter. A few options are listed.

1. Use the *Aging* module on the CD. Project it on a screen and ask students to identify key age related changes as you cover the information included with the professor segment of the module.
2. Go through the various body systems using a chalkboard and or a flip chart.
 - a. As students give answers, correct and/or elaborate on anything that needs clarification.
 - b. Ask, "What are normal, age related changes?" Point out any changes that are disease related.
 - c. For each system covered, ask:
 - i. How does this impact:
 1. communication and/or
 2. caregiving?

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How can LTCO use this information? Be attuned to the students' understanding of appropriate role of LTCO in talking with families, residents, and staff. Be alert to any statements that imply a student is responding as a surveyor or a professional care giver instead of an advocate role.

II. Myths and Stereotypes About Care

(Fifteen to thirty minutes)

1. Briefly mention the Nursing Home Reform Law as discussed in the curriculum resource material.
2. Review the myths and stereotypes about care that are discussed in the curriculum resource material.
 - a. Ask questions to offer students an opportunity to provide information about the topic.
 - b. Suggest good care practices and mention applicable residents' rights.
3. The role of the LTCO
 - a. Mention appropriate LTCO role/actions if poor care practices are encountered. Ask about each type of situation (myth) that is discussed.
 - b. Briefly talk about how LTCO can use this information with staff, residents, and families.

III. Common Illnesses

(Thirty minutes)

1. Select a few common illnesses to discuss.
2. Focus on the impact of the illness on resident's functioning; good care practices; and communication tips.
3. Inform LTCO about community or state resources for more information on these illnesses as well as illnesses that are not discussed in this class.
4. Remind LTCO that
 - a. they are not to be expert advisors to residents

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- or families about illness and treatment,
- b. more information can be acquired later in an in-service training or from other sources about various illnesses, and
- c. they need to know when something might need to be questioned and how to begin to search for other resources in order to connect individuals to primary sources of assistance.

III. The LTCO and the Resident: A Guide to Good Practice

(One hour if used in lieu of other teaching suggestions in this outline. Fifteen to thirty minutes if used to supplement other methods.)

1. Introduce students to the appendix resource, “The Ombudsman Representative and the Resident: A Guide to Good Practice.”
 - a. Option: Use this resource to discuss aging and to integrate the application of knowledge with LTCO practice instead of using the other ideas in Sections II and III of this outline.
 - b. Ask questions about the areas, or select a few areas to highlight, contained in this resource.
 - i. Check to see if students understand what to look for as potential indicators of problems with care (application of aging content).
 - ii. Listen to see if students know what to do as a LTCO if they observe these signs or have residents or family members express concerns in these areas.

YOUR NOTES