



## THE PROBLEM-SOLVING PROCESS FOR FAMILIES

### The Problem-Solving Process for Families

#### Stage I: Defining the Problem

<b>Step 1: Identify the problem</b>	What exactly is the problem? Describe the problem with as much specific detail as possible.
<b>Step 2: Identify supporting information.</b>	What information do I have about the problem? Information can come from observation, discussion with a loved one or staff, documents, etc.
<b>Step 3: Write a statement of the problem with supporting information.</b>	Use objective, factual language (See “ <b>Documentation Tips for Family Members</b> ”) when writing your statement and include information/evidence that supports your statement.
<b>Step 4: (Optional) Identify if there are any laws or regulations that address the problem.</b>	While you should voice any concern that you believe is a problem, it can strengthen your case and increase your confidence if you know what (if any) regulations are applicable. You can look up state and federal nursing facility regulations at <a href="http://www.hpm.umn.edu/nhregsPlus/index.htm">http://www.hpm.umn.edu/nhregsPlus/index.htm</a> or you can consult your local ombudsman.

#### Stage II: Analysis and Planning

<b>Step 5: Determine your goal</b>	What does (or would) my loved one want to happen? What is an acceptable resolution? What outcome will benefit your family member? Make sure the goal is realistic and benefits your loved one. For example, instead of setting a goal to get the charge nurse fired, determine what needs to be addressed and resolved regarding the charge nurse’s impact on your family member’s care.
<b>Step 6: Assess what has already been done</b>	Think about the steps that you have already taken to resolve this problem. Whom did you talk to, when was the conversation, what did they say? What, if anything, happened after speaking with them?
<b>Step 7: Consider possible approaches</b>	Identify what action you could take to try to solve the problem at this point. Examples of approaches include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find out if there is a designated person on staff to handle complaints and then speak with that person</li> <li>• Speak with the charge nurse</li> <li>• Speak with the Director of Nursing</li> <li>• Speak with the Administrator</li> <li>• Discuss the problem during a care plan conference</li> <li>• Take the problem to the family council</li> </ul>

<b>Step 8: Identify the pros and cons of each possible approach you came up with in Step 7.</b>	Think through the “upside” and “downside” of the approaches you identified.
<b>Step 9: Choose an approach</b>	After weighing the pros and cons, decide on the approach you think would be best given the situation and what you are comfortable doing.
<b>Step 10: Act!!</b>	Take the action you decided on in Step 9. Follow up any discussion you had with facility administration or staff by sending a note summarizing the discussion and including any specific steps the nursing home stated it would take.
<b>Step 11: Evaluate the outcome</b>	<p>What is the result of your action? Is the problem resolved? Partially resolved? Not resolved?</p> <p>If the problem is resolved, thank the facility administration and staff.</p> <p>If the problem is only partially resolved or not resolved at all:</p> <p>a) Repeat Steps 7-11  <i>Possible approaches at this point include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting with the administrator</li> <li>• Writing a letter to the administrator and copying (“cc”) the corporate office and the ombudsman</li> <li>• Writing to and/or meeting with a regional manager or someone from corporate office (for-profit facilities)</li> <li>• Writing to or meeting with the facility’s board of directors (non-profit facilities)</li> <li>• Taking the issue to the family council or forming a council if one does not exist</li> </ul> <p>b) Identify where you could turn for assistance  <i>Examples include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ombudsman program (to find a local ombudsman and other state agencies visit <a href="http://www.ltombudsman.org">http://www.ltombudsman.org</a>)</li> <li>• The state survey agency to file a complaint (to find your state survey agency and other state agencies visit <a href="http://www.ltombudsman.org">http://www.ltombudsman.org</a>)</li> <li>• A citizen advocacy group (CAG) if one exists in your state. (To find information regarding CAGs and locate a CAG , visit the Consumer Voice CAG webpage: <a href="http://www.theconsumervoice.org/advocate/advocacy-group-center">http://www.theconsumervoice.org/advocate/advocacy-group-center</a>)</li> </ul>