



PROBLEM-SOLVING WORKSHEET FOR FAMILIES

Developed by Robyn Grant, MSW

For additional tips and assistance in completing this worksheet, review the Problem-Solving Process for Families chart.

Stage 1: Defining the problem

1. Identify the problem.

What exactly is the problem?

2. Identify supporting information.

What information do you have about the problem (e.g. when the problem occurs or has occurred, where in the facility, at what time, who is involved, etc.)? Information can come from observation, discussion with resident or staff, documents, etc.

3. Written statement of the problem with supporting information.

Use the information from the above to prepare a written statement describing the problem. Use objective, factual language when writing the statement (See handout **Documentation Tips for Family Members**)

Note: This written statement is important because it:

- *gives you talking points that you can use with the facility*
- *ensures you have the facts and details that will help with resolution*
- *provides you with something you can submit if necessary*
- *focuses on objective facts*

4. Identify any laws or regulations that address the problem.

To find state and/or federal nursing home regulations or state assisted living regulations visit http://www.hpm.umn.edu/nhregsplus/NHRegs_by_State/By%20State%20Main.html OR consult your local ombudsman. NOTE: 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.

Stage 2: Analysis and planning

5. Determine the goal.

What does (or would) your loved one want to happen? What outcome will benefit your family member? What is an acceptable resolution? Identify a goal that you and your loved one both support and that is realistic.

6. Assess what has already been done. Identify the steps have you've already taken to resolve this problem (e.g. when did you address this concern, who did you speak with and what did they say, did you submit your concerns in writing).

7. Consider possible approaches.

What are the different approaches you could take to try to solve the problem at this point? A few examples of approaches include the following:

- Find out if there is a designated person on staff to handle complaints and speak with that person
- Speak with the charge nurse
- Speak with the Director of Nursing
- Speak with the Administrator
- Discuss the problem at a care plan conference
- Take the problem to the family council

8. What are the pros and cons of each approach identified in #7?

9. Choose an approach.

Given what you've already done, the pros and cons of the different approaches, and your strengths and weaknesses, what is the best approach to addressing this problem?

Stage 3: Action and Follow-Up

10. Act!

Describe the steps taken to act on the problem.

11. Evaluate the outcome.

Is the problem resolved? Partially resolved? Not resolved?

If the problem is only partially resolved or not resolved at all, what else can you try?

- a) Repeat Steps 7-11, selecting a different approach from the list in #7.

AND/OR

- b) Identify where you could turn for assistance. Examples include:

- The long-term care ombudsman program. To find a local ombudsman and other state agencies visit <http://www.ltombudsman.org>.
- The state survey agency to file a complaint. To find your state survey agency and other state agencies visit <http://www.ltombudsman.org>.
- A citizen advocacy group if one exists in your state. (To find information regarding CAGs and locate a CAG, visit the Consumer Voice CAG webpage: <http://www.theconsumervoice.org/advocate/advocacy-group-center>)