



PROBLEM-SOLVING WORKSHEET- EXAMPLE

Developed by Robyn Grant and used with permission from United Senior Action of Indiana

This is an example of the Problem-Solving Worksheet when used to work through the problem-solving process.

Stage 1: Defining the problem

1. Identify the problem.

What exactly is the problem?

My mother is a resident at Morning Glory Nursing Home. She needs assistance to the bathroom every two hours. For the last two months, I've found her wet when I visit on the weekends. Each time I find her wet, I've asked an aide to clean her up. On two occasions I've have spoken with the weekend nurse about the problem and she told me that it would be addressed. I continue to find my mother wet on the weekends.

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 a loved one or staff, documents, etc.

I have information from my own personal observation. In my journal I recorded the dates and times and where I found my mother wet. I also wrote down whom I talked to, their positions, and what they said.

3. Written statement of 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 (review the **Documentation Tips for Family Members** resource)

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*

I have found my mother, Alice Thomas, in Room 102 on the Pavilion Unit, wet when I visited her on the weekends over the past two months. Below are the dates, times and locations in which I have found my mother wet and the name of the nursing assistant that I asked to clean her up:

Saturday, September 5, 2009, 2:00 pm - her room.

Nursing assistant: Jeanie Peters

Sunday, September 6, 2009, 11:30 am – dining room

Nursing assistant: Sue Johnson
Saturday, September 12, 2009, 10:00 am – her room
Nursing assistant: Mary Roberts
Sunday, September 13, 2009, 4:00 pm – her room
Nursing assistant: Rachel Jackson
Saturday, September 19, 2009, 1:30 pm –her room
Nursing assistant: Nancy Smith
Sunday September 20, 2009, 3:00 pm – her room
Nursing assistant: Lori Horton
Saturday, September 26, 2009, 11:00 am - lounge
Nursing assistant: Caroline Phillips
Sunday, September 27, 2009, 2:30 pm – her room
Nursing assistant: Sara Spencer
Saturday, October 3, 2009, 9:15 am – dining room
Nursing assistant: Tom Albertson
Sunday, October 4, 2009, 10:30 am – her room
Nursing assistant: Joan Davids
Saturday, October 10, 2009, 1:00 pm – dining room
Nursing assistant: Judy Peters
Sunday, October 11, 2009, 3:45 pm – her room
Nursing assistant: Alan Miller
Saturday October 17, 2009, 12:00 pm – dining room
Nursing assistant: Emma Moore
Sunday October 18, 2009, 2:30 pm - lounge
Nursing assistant: Abby Taylor
Saturday October 24, 2009, 7:00 pm – her room
Nursing assistant: Rebecca Newport
Sunday October 25, 2009, 10:00 am – her room
Nursing assistant: Julie Harris

On September 19, I brought this problem to the attention of the week-end RN, Jody Keller. She assured me that it wouldn't happen again.

On October 3, I spoke with Jody Keller again about the same concern. She told me that the problem would be addressed.

Prepared by Barbara Thomas, daughter of Alice Thomas, 10/27/09

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

To find state and/or federal nursing home regulations and 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.

This example has been completed using federal nursing home regulations, but you may want to review your state's nursing home regulations that relate to your concern. Depending on the situation, you may not need to include state and federal regulations when discussing your concerns with the facility as using one or the other may be sufficient.

Regulations related to the problem:

(This scenario assumes that Alice Thomas is wet is because she has not received the assistance she needs to get to the bathroom.)

Regulation #1

- *Federal regulation: The facility must promote care for residents in a manner and in an environment that maintains or enhances each resident's dignity and respect in full recognition of his or her individuality.*

Regulation #2

- *Federal regulation: A resident has the right to --*
 - *Reside and receive services in the facility with reasonable accommodation of individual needs and preferences, except when the health or safety of the individual or other residents would be endangered.*

Regulation #3

- *Federal regulation: The facility must have sufficient nursing staff to provide nursing and related services to attain or maintain the highest practicable physical, mental, and psychosocial well-being of each resident, as determined by resident assessments and individual plans of care.*

Regulation #4

- *Federal regulation: A facility must care for its residents in a manner and in an environment that promotes maintenance or enhancement of each resident's quality of life.*

Regulation #5

- *Federal regulation: Each resident must receive and the facility must provide the necessary care and services to attain or maintain the highest practicable physical, mental, and psychosocial well-being, in accordance with the comprehensive assessment and plan of care.*

Regulation #6

- *Federal regulation: A resident's abilities in activities of daily living do not diminish unless circumstances of the individual's clinical condition demonstrate that diminution was unavoidable. This includes the resident's ability to --*
 - *Bathe, dress, and groom;*
 - *Transfer and ambulate;*
 - *Toilet;*
 - *Eat; and*
 - *Use speech, language, or other functional communication systems.*

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.

Mom can't tell me what she wants, but she has always been very fastidious about her looks and personal hygiene. She would be mortified to be wet. I think we want the same goal – for her to be kept clean and dry.

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).

I asked the aide on duty each time to clean mother up. I also spoke with the weekend nurse twice - September 19 and October 3. She said she would take care of the problem.

7. Consider possible approaches.

What are the different approaches I 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

I could:

- *Find out if there is a designated person on staff to handle complaints and speak with that person*
- *Speak with the weekend nurse again*
- *Speak with the Director of Nursing (DON)*

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

Speak with the facility's designated staff person: Pro: I would be using the facility's own procedure. Con: This might delay the resolution because my concern would have to be channeled first to the right department.

Speaking with the weekend nurse again: Pro: This would show that I am really trying to work with her. Con: I've done this twice already and nothing improved. Going back to her would just delay fixing the problem.

Speak with the DON: Pro: The DON is the next person in the nursing department chain of command. It is the DON's job to make sure residents are getting proper care. The DON has the authority to address this problem. Con: The DON is very busy and it could be hard to set a time to talk with her.

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?

I will speak with the Director of Nursing – that seems like the fastest and most direct approach - and she has the power to do something about the situation.

Stage 3: Action and Follow-Up

10. Act!

Describe the steps taken to act on the problem.

I met with the Director of Nursing on October 29, 2009 and presented my concern using my written statement. I gave her a copy of the statement. She said she would review with staff the importance of keeping residents clean and dry, specifically address the issue with the weekend staff on your mother's wing, and ask the weekend charge nurse to monitor the situation and report back to her.

11. Evaluate the outcome.

Is the problem resolved? Partially resolved? Not resolved?

The problem is not solved. My mother was wet on October 31, November 1, November 7 and November 8.

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>)

I could:

- *Talk to the administrator*
- *Go to the family council*
- *Contact the ombudsman*