

Role Play #1 – Slow Staff Response to Call Lights¹

OBJECTIVES:

1. To reinforce the resident's right to quality care and to complain
2. To model ways to work on a problem when the resident doesn't want his or her name used
3. To model ways to follow-up on a problem from week to week
4. To brainstorm ways to get the call lights answered more quickly

CHARCTERS:

1. Narrator
2. Ombudsman
3. Mr. Smith (Resident)

ROLE PLAY:

NARRATOR: The ombudsman visits with Mr. Smith. Mr. Smith is lying on his bed (two chairs end-to-end) and the ombudsman is sitting in a chair next to him. Mr. Smith fidgets with his clothes a little.

OMBUDSMAN: Are you looking forward to seeing your grandkids this afternoon? Don't they usually visit on Tuesdays?

MR. SMITH: Yes. My daughter said she and the grandkids plan to stop by. They didn't visit last week. I think one of the kids had a dentist appointment.

OMBUDSMAN: I see your trash can has some stuff in it. Has your room been cleaned today? (The ombudsman sniffs the air nonchalantly.)

MR. SMITH: (Appears embarrassed, pauses before answering) Yes the room was cleaned this morning but... lately I couldn't make it to the bathroom in time. (Mr. Smith appears frustrated.)

OMBUDSMAN: Tell me about what's happening.

MR. SMITH: Well... it takes forever before somebody comes in to help me. I don't need much help, just some help walking to the bathroom. They tell me I'm not supposed to try and get to the bathroom by myself and that I should call them when I have to go. HA! Call them!?! I keep punching the call light and nobody comes! I hate this place.

¹ Missouri State LTCOP Role Plays, NORC Website

OMBUDSMAN: Would you like me to go get someone to change your clothes?

MR. SMITH: Yes, please, it's uncomfortable.

NARRATOR: Just outside the resident's room he (or she) tells Mr. Smith goodbye, then makes a note to ask him about the call light problem on the next visit. A CNA enters Mr. Smith's room and solves the immediate problem.

Now it is the following week....

OMBUDSMAN: How is your family doing? Did you see the grandkids last week?

MR. SMITH: Yes. Everyone is fine. (Better mood, no fidgeting)

OMBUDSMAN: I was concerned after my last visit. You told me getting staff to come when you push your call light can be a problem. How is staff responding since then?

MR. SMITH: Yes, when I have to go to the bathroom in the afternoon, I can't get anyone to help me. I get a quick response at night and early mornings. Just afternoons seem to be a problem.

OMBUDSMAN: So, it's the afternoon shift that isn't as responsive. How would you feel about going with me to talk to the director of nursing or the administrator?

MR. SMITH: I've complained so much, they don't listen anymore.

OMBUDSMAN: Okay. Would you like me to ask for you? I can mention you by name *or* I can check into this without using your name. I can also check to see if other people are having a similar problem.

MR. SMITH: Yes, that's fine; I just don't want to get in trouble for this. You can check into it as long as you *don't use my name*.

NARRATOR:

It is the following week....

The ombudsman makes a facility visit in the afternoon and spends the first half of his (or her) visit making observations in the hall. The ombudsman observes staff response times to call lights noting what time the call light came on and then how much time elapsed before staff responded.

It is clear to the ombudsman that no one is paying close attention to call lights. The staff is spending a lot of time talking with each other during shift change. During shift change, the call light response times were longer.

The ombudsman spends the second half of his (or her) facility visit having conversations with other residents. During conversations, the ombudsman asked residents about their experiences with call light response times. Four residents report problems getting help in the afternoon.

It is the following week....

OMBUDSMAN: Hi Mr. Smith, how are you?

MR. SMITH: I'm good. You?

OMBUDSMAN: I'm fine. I wanted to stop by and update you on what I've found out so far about how long people are waiting for help in the afternoons. I came last week and visited with other residents. My goal was to find out what experiences they've had with call light responses. Several people told me they've also experienced long wait times in the afternoon.

I also spent some time observing staff call light response times. Responses to call lights varied from 10 to 30 minutes. During shift change response times were the longest. With your permission, I want to help you and other residents to improve call light response times in the afternoon. Here are some of my ideas....

DISCUSSION:

1. How would you approach other residents to find out if they have extended call light response times without alarming them or sharing Mr. Smith's concerns?

2. If you were the ombudsman in this scenario, how would you work to solve this problem?

Role Play 2 – Working with Resistant Staff²

OBJECTIVES:

1. To practice ways of being assertive with facility staff
2. To gain ideas for alternative ways to solve problems related to uncooperative staff

CHARACTERS:

1. Narrator
2. Ombudsman
3. Executive Director

ROLE PLAY:

NARRATOR: During today's facility visit, the ombudsman received dietary complaints from four residents. All four said turnips are served too often. They said they were served three times in the last week. They request more variety.

OMBUDSMAN (to the executive director): I need to tell you about some food concerns reported to me. Several people told me turnips were served three times in the past week. They want more variety.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Our corporate dietician creates our menus and follows the guidelines provided by the State. I don't think you're qualified to criticize the menus. I wish you'd stay within the scope of your job.

OMBUDSMAN: While I'm not a dietician, I've heard these concerns from residents. This is important to them.

Do you have a food committee here for residents? This kind of committee can help ensure residents' right to have their food preferences respected and improve satisfaction with dietary services.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR: Who are these people that are complaining? Let me talk to them. Lots of residents complain no matter what you serve them. They just want a gourmet meal. We're just following doctors' orders because a lot of residents have specialized diets their physician prescribed, and I can't change that!

² Missouri State LTCOP Role Plays, NORC Website

DISCUSSION:

1. How would you try to respond to leadership who isn't open to change or questions?
2. How would you verify the residents' complaint? How would you verify whether turnips were served three times in the past week?
3. What are some responses to the administrator that sound fair, firm, and friendly?
4. How would you avoid getting sidetracked with comments like "some people complain all the time," "we're following doctors' orders," "we use corporate prepared menus," etc.?
5. What are some pitfalls an ombudsman should watch for during a conversation like this?

Role Play 3 – Staff Conflicts³

OBJECTIVES:

1. To model appropriate responses when hearing a problem about staff members
2. To help ombudsmen clarify their role as resident advocates, not staff advocates
3. To practice ways of being assertive with facility staff

CHARACTERS:

1. Narrator
2. CNA #1
3. CNA #2
4. Ombudsman

ROLE PLAY:

NARRATOR: The ombudsman approaches two CNAs who are talking in the hall. Both appear agitated.

CNA #1: Can I talk to you? We have a problem with the administrator. He is SO unreasonable! There already isn't enough staff on the floor and now he keeps the new CNA from working by flirting with her – A LOT. We've complained to her but she just says that the rest of us are jealous. The administrator is wasting the new CNA's time and creating work for us. Can you do something?

OMBUDSMAN: You guys work so hard and I respect the work you do. But, I am a resident advocate; my role is to help residents with their concerns. Getting involved in personnel issues is not in my scope of services. This sounds like something you need to discuss with the DON (Director of Nurses).

CNA #2: But this does affect residents. They aren't getting the help they need because we can't do our jobs.

DISCUSSION:

1. What other kinds of staff conflicts do you think an ombudsman may hear about or be asked about?
2. What are some appropriate responses to CNA #2?

³ Missouri State LTCOP Role Plays, NORC Website

Role Play 4 – Call Lights⁴

OBJECTIVES:

1. To model ways of making sure an ombudsman communicates with the resident even though family members are present
2. To gain ideas for alternative ways to solve problems

CHARACTERS:

1. Narrator
2. Georgia or George (Resident's daughter or son)
3. Mr. (or Ms.) Bond (Resident)

ROLE PLAY:

NARRATOR: The ombudsman knocks on Mr. Bond's door. Mr. Bond's daughter (or son) Georgia (or George) says "Come in." Mr. Bond has some speech problems but can talk if given enough time. He can easily answer yes and no questions.

OMBUDSMAN: Hello Mr. Bond, Georgia. How are you today?

GEORGIA: Fine.

OMBUDSMAN: (Looks at Mr. Bond) How are you Mr. Bond?

MR. BOND: (Gives a thumbs up)

GEORGIA: Dad told me the CNAs are taking a long time to respond to his call light when he needs to go to the bathroom.

OMBUDSMAN: I'm sorry to hear about that. Mr. Bond, is there a particular time of day when this is a problem?

MR. BOND (Nods his head, saying "yes".)

OMBUDSMAN: (Looks at Mr. Bond) I'd like to hear more about this.

GEORGIA: I spoke to the afternoon CNA and she claims that all call lights are answered as soon as possible. What can we do?

OMBUDSMAN: (Looks at Mr. Bond) Mr. Bond, I'd like to hear more about your concerns.

⁴ Missouri State LTCOP Role Plays, NORC Website

MR. BOND: (Long pause and then Mr. Bond answers) My daughter can tell you.

DISCUSSION:

1. Is there anything else the ombudsman should ask Georgia (George) or Mr. Bond?

2. What are some alternative courses of action you might suggest for this ombudsman? (Keep in mind empowering the resident and including the daughter in accordance with Mr. Bond's wishes.)

Role Play 5 – Resident’s Right to Participate in Activities⁵

OBJECTIVES:

1. To model ways to empower a resident to solve his or her own problems
2. To suggest ways of helping a resident speak for himself or herself
3. To remind ombudsmen of the resident’s right to choose activities
4. To help ombudsmen understand the care plan process and how to use it to advocate for a resident

CHARACTERS:

- Narrator
- Ombudsman
- Ms. Hay (resident)

ROLE PLAY:

NARRATOR: The ombudsman knocks on a resident door.

OMBUDSMAN: May I come in?

MS. HAY: Please. How are you?

OMBUDSMAN: Wonderful. How are things going for you?

MS. HAY: Fine I guess since there isn’t much to do around here.

OMBUDSMAN: I saw on the activity calendar they are having bingo later today.

MS. HAY: I hate bingo!

OMBUDSMAN: What would you rather do?

MS. HAY: I don’t know, nothing they have here.

OMBUDSMAN: How did you spend most days before you moved here?

MS. HAY: I didn’t do much. I worked on my farm.

OMBUDSMAN: You know, you have the right to have activities that are interesting to you. Have you spoken to the activities director about what interests you?

⁵ Missouri State LTCOP Role Plays, NORC Website

MS. HAY: No. He's too busy doing all that other stuff.

OMBUDSMAN: He probably is busy but this is important. It might be good to talk to him in your care plan meeting. Have you been to one of those?

MS. HAY: I don't think so.

OMBUDSMAN: Staff here must have a care plan meeting at least every three months and more often if needed. You and any of your family members you invite can discuss your care with staff. You can also talk about what you want or what you need. It's a good time to talk about what you like you do.

MS. HAY: Staff said something to me about a meeting a couple of times but I didn't know what it was so I didn't go.

OMBUDSMAN: Would you like to ask for a care plan meeting or talk to the activities director?

MS. HAY: I think I can talk to the activities director. Can you set that up?

OMBUDSMAN: Sure I can. How about we make a list of things you want to talk to him about? I can help you with that. If you want, I can also help you practice how to ask him about activities and let him know what you want to do to stay active.

DISCUSSION:

1. How would you help Ms. Hay create her list?

2. What would be your next steps, including follow-up on this case?