

Understanding Resident Preferences for a Person-Centered Nursing Home Experience

Why Knowing Residents' Preferences Matters:

Older adults that reside in a nursing home consider it to be a place of residence. It is a place where they should feel safe, comfortable, and “at home.” Considering their needs, preferences, and values promotes person-centered care. It shifts the focus of care to be more holistic and focused on the whole person, which ultimately improves the quality of care, empowers residents, and improves resident experience and satisfaction.

Asking about a resident’s preferences and needs can help identify what is most important to them and how to provide daily care that considers what they find most helpful and meaningful to them. It also advances health equity because it factors in their beliefs, preferences, knowledge, and background, as well as acknowledges and respects their culture.

Best Practices to Capture Preferences:



Purpose and Goal:

- Explain to staff and residents why this is important.
- Discuss how the care plan can accommodate their preferences.



Direct Conversation:

- Talk with residents to learn what they like and dislike.
- Ask open-ended questions to get all the details.



Family and Community Involvement:

- Include families when it is appropriate (e.g., for patients with cognitive impairment).
- Listen to the resident council to understand the broader preferences of the community.



Documentation and Updates:

- Use a standardized process to collect resident preferences.
- Document resident preferences clearly and make them easily accessible to staff.
- Make the documentation form flexible to fit each resident’s needs.
- Update preferences as resident’s needs, interests, or health change.



Putting it Into Action:

- Share these preferences with everyone who cares for them.
- Collaborate with the care team to make sure the preferences can be accommodated.
- Talk to the resident about the plan and make sure they feel comfortable with it.



Privacy Considerations:

- Ensure the resident understands that the information will be shared broadly.
- Stay away from noting Protected Health Information (PHI) in the form.

Collecting Residents' Preferences: Prompts and Questions

Name

What is your preferred name or how would you like to be addressed? [e.g., Mr. Smith, Suzanne but preferred to be called "Sue"]

Bio/Background

Tell us a little bit about yourself, your background, and your family if you'd like.

Food Preferences

Do you have any food preferences? Are there any foods specific to your culture or family background that we should be aware of? [e.g., foods you like, dislike, or foods that might be specific to your culture or family, or have a special meaning to you, such as, ice cream on Sundays, salty snacks in the afternoon]

Activities

Are there any activities you enjoy doing? Individually? In a group setting? [Such as crossword puzzle, reading non-fiction books, going for a long walk]

Clothing

What type of clothing makes you feel most comfortable, and do you have any specific preferences for what you wear at specific times or temperatures? [Such as when it's cold, you like to wear multiple layers that you can later remove, preference for clothing to wear at night for bedtime]

Comfort

What makes you feel better when you are stressed or upset? [Such as walks, meditation, music, coffee, praying]

Special Holidays/Occasions

Are there any special holidays or occasions you celebrate that you'd like us to be aware of? [Such as family celebrating Easter together with the grandkids, and have a meal afterwards, family commemorates their grandmother on her birthday by making her famous pie]

Routines and Other Preferences

Are there any routines or other preferences when it comes to your care that we should consider? [Such as coffee and newspaper to begin the day, preferring to shower before bedtime, going for a walk after lunch]

Displaying Resident Preferences: The Resident Preference Card

Name:	
About Me:	
Food Preferences:	Activities of Interest:
Clothing Preferences:	Comfort Practices:
Daily Routines:	Special Occasions/Holidays:
Other Preferences:	