Resident Rights, Abuse and Exploitation

Residents have the right to be safe!
You have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.

This is the granddaddy of all rights. If we always practiced this, there would be no need for the rest of the rights.

- How do we treat our patients with respect?
  - Treating our patients with sensitivity, empathy, kindness.
  - Listening to our patients and following up on their needs/concerns.
  - Understanding their rights to privacy, confidentiality and decision making.
  - Not forcing our values onto our patients.
  - Do not label your patients as ‘uncooperative’, ‘non-compliant’ or any of those labels that have negative connotations.
You have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.

What is dignity? How do we know when we are treating people with respect and dignity?

- The essence of dignity is recognizing our patients as unique human beings and valuing them as individuals.
- What does dignity ‘look like’? (There are many examples. These are just a few).
  - Assuring patients are clean and covered up and being spoken to in a kind, calm tone of voice.
  - Attending to the basic needs of a patient in a timely, respectful manner.
  - Taking the time to find out what our patients value, taking the time to find out what is unique about the patient is and how he or she wants to be treated.
  - Respecting privacy and respecting the patient’s space and property.
You have the right to make a suggestion or complaint without being treated differently.

- It is our job to make patients feel SAFE to make a suggestion or complaint without the fear of retaliation.
- We need to assure patients from the start that Woodridge wants them to have the best possible experience and the only way that can happen is if they tell us when things go wrong.
You have the right to make your own decisions and have all the information you need to make decisions.

- We all have the right to make our own choices; we don’t lose that right just because we get old.
- WDR employees have the responsibility to inform patients regarding health care decisions/choices so that the patient / family can make an INFORMED decision. We may not agree with choices made, but it is still the patient’s right!
  - This is true for people who are capable of making decisions but it’s also true for people with dementia.
You have the right to privacy and confidentiality.

- Privacy means privacy of one’s body and one’s “stuff.”
- We need permission to move or rearrange things in a patient’s room, just as we would if we were working in their private home.
- Privacy means knocking on doors, pulling curtains, keeping people covered up, and only having as many caregivers in the room as needed to provide the care.
You have the right to privacy and confidentiality.

- Confidentiality means privacy of information. Nursing homes are incredibly non-private places.
- We have to ALWAYS BE AWARE of who may be overhearing what we’re saying.
- When people come here to stay, they or their family members tell us to whom it’s okay to give information.
  - Without permission from the resident or authorized family member, we cannot give out information.
Resident Rights

- Where are the Resident Rights posted at WDR?
  - They are posted in the upper lobby, on the Spruce Common Hall1 wall.
Abuse can happen anywhere.
There are no social or class barriers.
It is wrong to stereotype the typical victim and typical abuser – it can happen to anyone.
Abuse can be premeditated/deliberate.
What is Abuse?

Vermont Law provides a broad definition of “abuse” as it applies to “vulnerable adults” (all residents at WDR are considered vulnerable adults) as follows:

“Any treatment of a vulnerable adult which places his or her life, health or welfare in jeopardy or which results in impairment of health.”
Types of Abuse

- **Neglect**
  - failure to provide whatever is necessary to maintain a patient’s health and safety such as intentional failure to follow a care plan
  - failure to report any significant change in a patient’s status.
  - failure to provide goods or services necessary to maintain the health or safety of a vulnerable adult.
Types of Abuse

- **Exploitation**
  - can be financial (by fraud, undue harassment, misappropriating or withholding funds)
  - can be sexual (sexual activity with a vulnerable adult when the adult does not consent or is incapable of consenting).

- **Physical Abuse**
  - Causing physical harm or injury to a vulnerable adult.
    - (this can include unnecessary or unlawful restraint)
Types of Abuse

- Emotional Abuse
  - Intentionally subjecting a vulnerable adult to behavior which results in intimidation, fear, humiliation, degradation, agitation, disorientation, or other forms of serious emotional distress.

- Verbal Abuse
Woodridge Policy Highlights

- The first three procedures have to do with PREVENTING mistreatment.
  - **Screening** – we try to hire good people. background checks.
  - **Training** – Training staff on abuse prevention, recognition and reporting
  - **Identifying Conditions** means we make sure we’re not setting the scene for someone to be mistreated.
    - For example: putting a dozen people at the circle who may get on each other’s nerves and then someone gets hurt.
    - Care planning appropriately for someone who has been aggressive at home so that we have a well communicated plan to address that here.
Woodridge Policy Highlights

- All employees must be aware of any signs of possible abuse, such as bruises and fractures of unknown origin, and certain behavior changes. If we cannot identify the probable cause of such things, we have to report it to APS as suspected abuse.

- All employees are **MANDATED reporters**! QUOTE: “It is the duty of all employees to report any suspicion of abuse, neglect or exploitation to a supervisor immediately after learning of its occurrence and then to see that a report is made to Adult Protective Services (APS) within 24 hours of the occurrence of the incident or within 2 hours of the occurrence if the result of the suspected abuse results in serious bodily injury”
Woodridge Policy Highlights

- We conduct our own investigation of all allegations of mistreatment and we cooperate with outside investigations.
- Sometimes the allegation is so serious that while it’s being investigated we need to take measures to protect the residents.
- Failure to report suspected abuse can result in monetary fines from $10,000.00 up to $300,000.00.
Remember, we are responsible for keeping our patients **SAFE** from abuse and if we suspect abuse of a patient from a caregiver, family member, visitor, etc., **we MUST report it.**

**It is the LAW.**