

The Beginnings of HERE TO HELP

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I've been asked to guest write on a blog; I am sure my college professors would be happy to see me use a long forgotten talent. Writing is, as with other exercises of the mind, subject to "if you don't use it, you lose it." I am afraid it isn't dead but gasping for breath. It is time to reinvigorate this segment of my life.

I began my role as an Administrator knowing the Elders were my first priority. Eight years in...I may have been right or at least almost right. The team working with the Elders is equal to the Elders as my first priority. They have to be. Unhappy or unmotivated team members bear unhappy, unsatisfied Elders. Team members who are happy and willing to go the extra mile yield loving, satisfied Elders. The Eden Alternative Golden Rule is true and there is seldom an exception, "As management does unto staff so staff do unto Elders."

As I have grown in my role another thing I have come to know is that team members do not come to work to do a bad job. Working as a care partner in a skilled nursing facility can bankrupt you emotionally. It also provides tremendous blessings untold – smiles from Elders, sly one line jokes from them, a kind pat on the hand. Those who do not find the blessings do not last and they should not. No one should be emotionally drained, feel overworked and not realize the nobility or importance of what they do.

So, if team members want to do right and you still have service related concerns from Elders, it serves to reason there is a need for education. We live in a world where manners and appropriate greetings are no longer a given. If we want Elders treated in a specific way, we must teach team members the way. At Methodist Senior Services, team members are on a journey of self-discovery. They are answering questions about how they can better communicate, trust and work with one another and answering questions about how they can better serve the Elders. It is a journey of being HERE TO HELP.

We want team members who are: **Happy** to serve; **Extend** a warm welcome; **Reach** out and related; **Embrace** responsibility and show reliability; **Take** time and take notice; **Operate** with a "Whatever It Takes" mentality; **Honor** Elders' homes; **Encourage** choices; **Love** to learn; and, **Pray**, play and make their day. These service basics are the heart of what we do. They work as anecdotes to loneliness, helplessness and boredom by encouraging relationships and meaningful spontaneity.

Team members deliver this message to all leadership care partners and to each other. They also teach all new team members before they begin working with the Elders. Team members hold each other and leadership to the basics. We treat these basics as a part of every team members' job. The basics are included in each performance appraisal.

"Performance improvement" is doable and with a little planning and thinking outside the box, you can even make it enjoyable. Dare I say "fun"? That marks the end of this blog and possibly the beginning of another one...I guess only time will tell.