The Journey to Nourish Teamwork and Effective Communication

*Teamwork*: a cooperative or coordinated effort on the part of a group of persons acting together as a team or in the interests of a common cause.

*Communication*: the imparting or exchange of thoughts, opinions, or information by speech, writing, or signs.

In today’s quality-driven culture, you can’t help but hear the drumbeat of teamwork – “Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.” (Helen Keller) or “Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success.” (Henry Ford). You’ve probably heard the same focus on communication – “The most important thing in communication is to hear what isn’t being said.” (Peter Drucker) or “To effectively communicate, we must realize that we are all different in the way we perceive the world and use this understanding as a guide to our communication with others.” (Anthony Robbins).

That drumbeat keeps resounding in the National Nursing Home Quality Care Collaborative (NNHQCC) as the next strategy in the Change Package, Strategy Four, focuses on Teamwork and Effective Communication. So, what are some practical things you can do to enhance teamwork and effective communication within your facility? Below are two areas of focus, with some examples of actionable items you can implement.

1. Expect and support effective communication with staff and between/among staff
   a. Hold a short, daily stand-up meeting between the manager/supervisor and staff on each shift to share information needed for care, organizational news, and to identify any concerns, resource needs, etc.
   b. Create systems that support the function of teams even when they do not have the luxury of meeting. For example, use email or staff journals, making sure you follow confidentiality requirements.
   c. Remove boundaries between/among departments. For example, establish regular neighborhood meetings on each shift to identify what is working well as well as opportunities to improve – make sure you involve all departments, including dining services, maintenance, and housekeeping.

2. Be a team player
   a. Involve all staff in changes and improvement to increase their experience of ownership and accountability.
   b. Encourage all staff to do whatever is necessary to support residents. For example, expect anyone to assist a resident who is requesting help, and model this through the leadership team.
   c. Involve managers in the work of the neighborhood, such as periodically assisting in the dining room during meals.
   d. Create opportunities for people across departments to pitch in and break down job divisions.

These are just a few examples of actionable items that can be implemented. For additional ideas, click on the following link to access information on Strategy Four – [http://atomalliance.org/download/change-package-strategy-4-nourish-teamwork-and-communication/](http://atomalliance.org/download/change-package-strategy-4-nourish-teamwork-and-communication/)

For assistance, contact Scott Gibson at **502-680-2669** or scott.gibson@area-G.hcqis.org.

Learn more at [www.atomAlliance.org](http://www.atomAlliance.org).