

The Advocate E-Newsletter - January 2017



January 2, 2017



A note from the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman:

Although a lot of recent media attention has focused on the issue of bullying, many people see it as something that happens primarily at school, work or online. However, bullying is becoming an increasing problem in long-term care facilities, and because aggressive behavior is often a symptom of an unmet need, this topic is one that long-term care providers need to be aware of and address.



According to the Hazelden Foundation, bullying is "intentional aggressive behavior involving an imbalance of power or strength." It can be verbal (e.g., name calling, teasing, taunting, making threats, using sarcasm), physical (e.g., pushing, hitting, destroying property, stealing) or anti-social (e.g., shunning, excluding, gossiping, spreading rumors, using negative body language), but bullying always has the same effect: it makes its victims feel fearful and powerless.

Because all long-term care residents and tenants have the right to live in a safe environment and be treated with respect and dignity, it is important for facilities to know how to identify and prevent bullying and other forms of resident-to-resident aggression. The article and resources listed below are great tools for beginning a discussion with residents and staff and, as always, the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman is available if you need additional assistance.

Together, we can make 2017 a safe, healthy and happy New Year for all of Iowa's long-term care residents and tenants.

Deanna Clingan-Fischer, JD

How to recognize and prevent bullying in long-term-care facilities



According to research conducted by Arizona State University, 10-20 percent of long-term care residents/tenants have been bullied by another individual living in their facility. But because society tends to think of older or disabled people solely as the victims and not the perpetrators of bullying, this kind of resident-to-resident aggression can easily be overlooked or misunderstood.

Here are some ways to recognize and prevent bullying in long-term care facilities:

Identify the bully

In long-term care facilities, bullies may intimidate staff as well as other residents; have a tendency to boss others around; criticize others or lack empathy for others; or make repeated complaints about others in a powerful, outraged manner.

Watch for changes in behavior

Like victims of bullying in any other setting, those who are bullied in long-term care facilities may start to act differently. Pay attention to residents who suddenly begin to isolate themselves; avoid specific areas or activities; take long, circuitous routes to get to and from communal areas; make vague complaints about others "not liking" them or "not letting" them; or become increasingly depressed.

Understand the aggression

When dealing with a bully on an individual basis, facilities can consistently set limits on bullying behavior, offer an appropriate outlet for the person to vent frustrations or work with the individual to identify alternate methods of feeling in control, learn positive communication skills, develop empathy and address feelings of loss.

Bolster the victims' confidence

Facilities can help those who have been bullied by fostering their self-worth and dignity, addressing and treating any underlying depression and providing skill development sessions that help them avoid being victimized.

Create a "Community of Care"

To address bullying at the organizational level, facilities should work toward creating caring communities for residents and staff that emphasizes respect, trust, accountability and empathy. This can be accomplished by:

- Holding regular staff and resident meetings that discuss communal living and the rules and expectations for behavior;
- Offering staff training and support around recognizing and responding to bullying and aggressive behavior;
- Implementing policies and procedures that guide behavior and encourage reporting of bullying incidents; and
- Training residents in bystander intervention strategies to help them stop bullying when it is observed.

For more information on bullying in long-term care facilities, visit the National Long-Term Care Ombudsman Resource Center to view a [webinar](#) or download a [brochure](#).

Upcoming Events & Educational Opportunities

WEBINAR: PAIN IN PARKINSON'S DISEASE

Tuesday, Jan. 10 (Noon-1 p.m. CT)

This webinar, presented by the Parkinson's Disease Foundation as part of its Parkinson's Disease Expert Briefings Series, will help participants understand how common pain is in Parkinson's disease; identify and describe the different types of pain commonly experienced in Parkinson's; and discuss current treatments for pain in Parkinson's disease, including pharmacological and non-pharmacological options. Registration is free; complimentary CEUs provided.

[More Information](#) | [Register](#)

WEBINAR: BENEFITS FOR CONSUMERS IN THE REVISED NURSING HOME REGULATIONS

Wednesday, Jan. 18 (1 p.m. CT)

This webinar, presented by Justice in Aging Attorney Eric Carlson, will look at several provisions that improve on the previous version of the regulations and discuss how lawyers and other advocates can use the new regulations to benefit residents. Specific topics will include care planning, resident-centered care, staff training, visitation, protections against eviction and returning to a facility following hospitalization.

[Register](#)

2017 DIALOGUE ON AGING SERIES: LEADERSHIP IN AGING - INSPIRING TOMORROW'S LEADERS TODAY

Friday, March 3 (9 a.m. - 3:15 p.m.)

Hilton Garden Inn | 8600 Northpark Dr. | Johnston, IA 50131

Join the Iowa Department on Aging on March 3 for the first event in its 2017 Dialogue on Aging Series. The topic for this event is "Leadership in Aging: Inspiring Tomorrow's Leaders

Today" and will begin with a public meeting of the Iowa Commission on Aging, followed by three thought-provoking presentations. Lunch is included and will feature the presentation of the 2016 Betty Grandquist Lifetime Achievement Award to two Iowans who have dedicated their personal and professional lives to improving the quality of life and care for older Iowans and persons with disabilities. Registration fee is \$25 per person and covers the cost of lunch. Space is limited; a block of hotel rooms has been reserved. RSVP by Friday, Feb. 10.

[More Information](#) | [Register](#)

The mission of the Office of the State Long-Term Care Ombudsman is to protect the health, safety, welfare and rights of individuals residing in long-term care by investigating complaints, seeking resolutions to problems and providing advocacy, with the goal of enhancing quality of life and care.

Please feel free to forward this newsletter to others who may be interested.