

Module 3: Educate Family Members about FFC

Educating the family members of your residents about your efforts to incorporate function focused care (FFC) into your site's philosophy is critical.

One of the ways you can begin to do this is by including information about function focused care in your facility's newsletter or other regular mailing to your residents' loved ones. To help with this, there is a **pre-written piece** included in this module that briefly introduces the concept of FFC to readers, and tells how you and your staff will be working with their loved ones to maintain function and independence. Please feel free to use and edit according to your needs.

If you do have a monthly or quarterly newsletter or mailing, you might also consider creating a "Function Focused Care" section or flier that highlights recent efforts and achievements of your facility as a whole, or of individual residents. Photos of people walking, taking exercise classes, or playing Wii can also add interest. Highlighting a different person as "resident of the month" for reaching his/her activity goals can be an effective motivator too.

Module 3 also includes an "**Ambulation Record**" form. This is a simple form that you can use with residents who have a goal of increasing their ambulation distance. The form helps staff and family members keep track of how far residents walk daily on a specific path in the facility. Using pictures or other objects to mark distances instead of measurements makes this even easier. For instance, the form included here uses pictures along the corridor as incremental goals. Since the pictures are already there, staff won't have to measure distances, and residents can easily see their goal. By keeping a record of progress, the resident, family members and staff may be more likely to attempt ambulation so the resident can reach his/her goal.

Finally, included in this module is a list with **simple tips for family members** to help encourage their loved ones to participate in regular physical activity.

Blurb for newsletter:

When it comes to physical activity, the old slogan, “use it or lose it” couldn’t be more true. With this in mind, our facility is committing to a new philosophy of care to promote the health and wellness of our residents. We call it “function focused care,” and the purpose is just as it sounds—to increase or maintain your loved one’s level of function.

Research repeatedly shows that older adults can improve their physical health and mental health, slow cognitive decline, and increase their ability to participate in personal care needs like bathing and dressing by engaging in regular physical activity. Even short spurts of 10 minutes of activity can result in significant physical benefits. And we shouldn’t dismiss the emotional benefits as well. Being able to care for oneself as much as possible helps preserve the dignity and independence that we all hope for as we age.

You’ll see that we will be working with your family member to participate as much as possible in personal care activities and to engage in physical activities such as walking to the dining room, attending exercise classes, or doing some stretching and strengthening exercises when waiting in the dining room. As we’ve already learned, many of our residents are capable of doing far more than any of us expected. We hope you’ll be pleasantly surprised too.

Ambulation Record

This form can help staff and family members easily keep track of how far residents walk daily on a specific path in your facility. In the example below, pictures on the wall down the hallway help staff mark distances instead of taking measurements. By keeping a record of progress, visiting family members & friends may be more likely to attempt ambulation so the resident can reach his/her goal.

Resident Name _____

Month/Year _____

Day of the Month	Staff Initial	Her door	1 st picture	2nd picture	3 rd picture	Next Hall	comment
1.							
2.							
3.							
4.							
5.							
6.							
7.							
8.							
9.							
10.							
11.							
12.							
13.							
14.							
15.							
16.							
17.							
18.							
19.							
20.							
21.							
22.							
23.							
24.							
25.							
26.							
27.							
28.							
29.							
30.							
31.							

10 Tips for Family to Help Promote Function Focused Care

- 1) Ask your family member about setting goals for fitness or activities of daily living (dressing, bathing, etc.), such as going to an exercise class regularly.
- 2) Find out when exercise classes are held. Help remind them to go.
- 3) Try to avoid visits during exercise class times, so they can attend class.
- 4) Or if you come during these times, attend the classes with them.
- 5) Tell them how important exercise is to promote overall health, increase strength, reduce falls, fractures, and hospitalizations, and to reduce and ultimately prevent pain.
- 6) Tell them about how you like to exercise, and what it has done for you.
- 7) When you visit your family member, exercise with them. Go for a walk, do basic range of motion exercises with them, such as rotating their joints (ankles, shoulders, knees, and wrists).
- 8) For birthday and holiday season- buy them gifts that promote their independence such as scrub mitts for residents that have problems with dexterity, zipper extenders for those that have trouble putting on clothes, and be sure to buy clothes that are easier to put on such as elastic banded pants and pull-on or zippered shirts. Hand weights will increase strength.
- 9) If they have a decline in function, don't think "do everything for them" is the best for them. It is important to promote their function and help them to get back to their baseline as much as possible.
- 10) Tell them you know they can reach their goals, "You can do it!"; "You look great!"; and that you are proud of them for their effort. A little goes a long way!

Get Family in on the *Action!*

During summertime and holiday breaks, kids are home from school and looking for things to do. Lots of these children are grandchildren of your residents. Why not invite them over for a few “playdates” during the year?

Websites to check out...

May is Older Americans month, and the Administration on Aging comes up with a new theme each year:

www.olderamericansmonth.aoa.gov

You have probably noticed that many older adults love being around children, and the children benefit from being around older adults too. Plus, making exercise a family and even community affair helps make physical activity more fun, and it feels less like “work” to those people who are less prone to engage in it.

Not sure where to start? Here’s a link to an activity toolkit developed by the Administration on Aging for May of 2012’s “Never Too Old to Play” month.

<http://www.olderamericansmonth.aoa.gov/ActivityToolkit/GetPhysical.aspx>

If you’re up for hosting a Wii tournament with residents and their families, here are some guidelines that may be helpful...

<http://www.olderamericansmonth.aoa.gov/WiiBowlingTournamentGuidelines.aspx>

How about hosting a family fun day this summer at your facility, and inviting families of your residents to come and exercise? The Olympics can be a great inspiration. Set up game stations outside with things like relay races, walkathons, hula hoop contests, ring toss, etc. You can even award medals (easily found at party stores) to winners. Serve some apple pie and other American favorites, and you’ll make memories that the children will savor as much as the adults.



Holiday Gift Ideas for Loves Ones

Since the holiday season is in full swing now, many of us are making our shopping lists. We know that finding the perfect gift for a loved one who is older can be challenging, so we're passing along some ideas. Of course, we encourage gifts that promote exercise and independence! Here are some ideas, along with links to websites where these products can be found:

- scrub mitts, zipper extenders for clothing, and other adaptive tools for those who have problems with dexterity, <http://www.wrightstuff.biz/>
- clothes that are easier to put on such as elastic banded pants and pull-on or zippered shirts, <http://www.buckandbuck.com/>
- new footwear to help reduce fall risk—sturdy, tie support shoes like New Balance sneakers are a good choice and many older adults like them, <http://www.newbalance.com/>
- hand weights to help increase strength, www.dickssportinggoods.com
- music CD's with songs that they can dance to, such as Big Band music and Oldies; these songs can also help elicit fond memories to share, <http://www.amazon.com>
- Wii games/X Box games, www.amazon.com/wii, www.xbox.com
- musical rhythm instruments such as tambourines that they can play with their friends, <http://www.rhythmband.com/?gclid=CK-SoruF66wCFcHd4Aod3iWIMw>
- pedometers to measure steps walked daily and can be used to set walking goals, <http://www.walk4life.com/home/default.aspx>

Happy shopping, and most importantly, we hope you and your family have a safe and joyous holiday season!

